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China

CHINA TOURISM

CHINESE NEW YEAR ON THE LOESS PLATEAU

INTERVIEW WITH REBECCA LI LOK SI

TEN SKIING RESORTS IN CHINA

272

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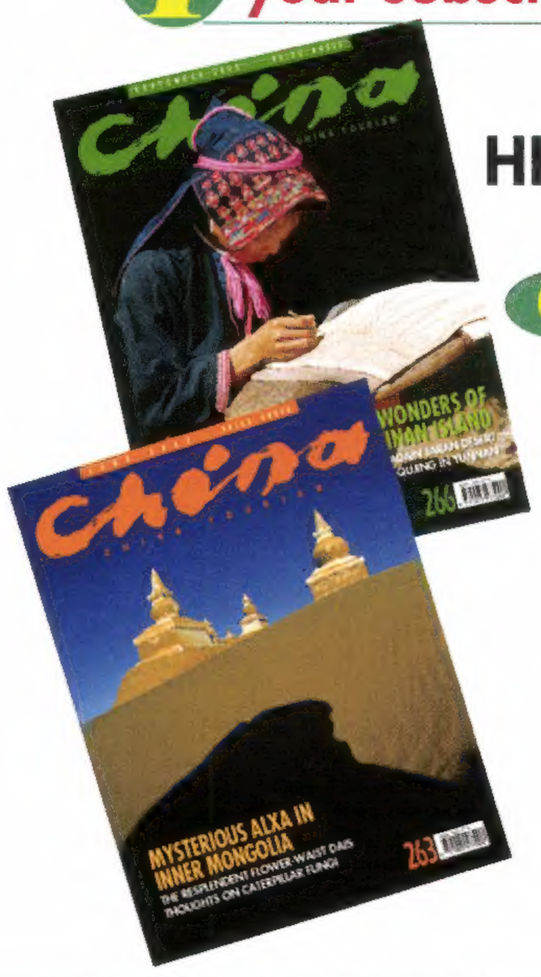

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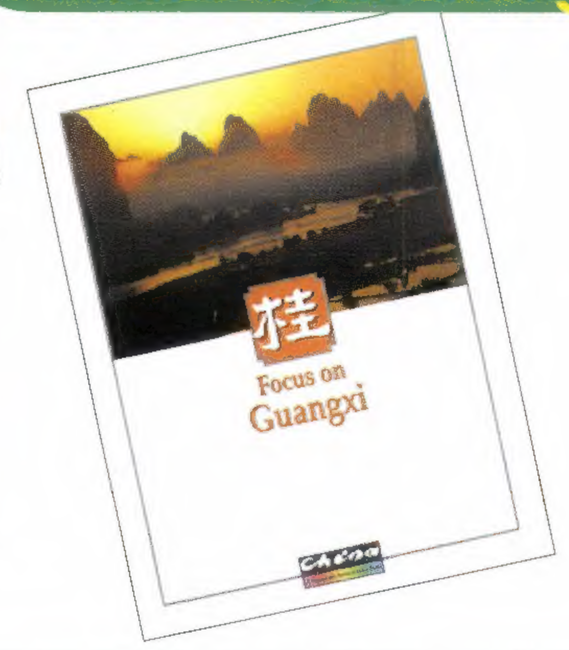

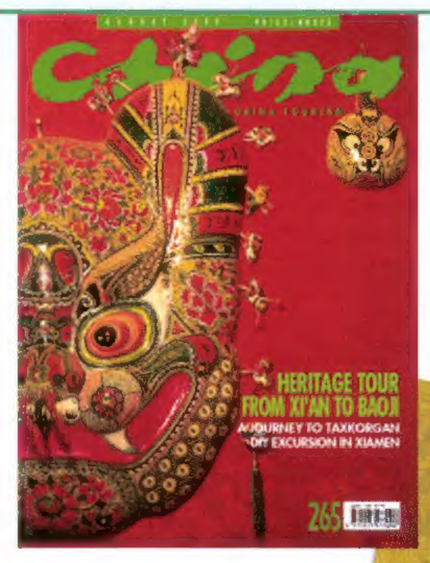

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Greeting the Chinese New Year on the Loess Plateau

Photos by Huang Xinli, Shi Baoxiu, Wang Pei, & others Article by Huang Xinli, Shi Baoxiu, Hu Jun

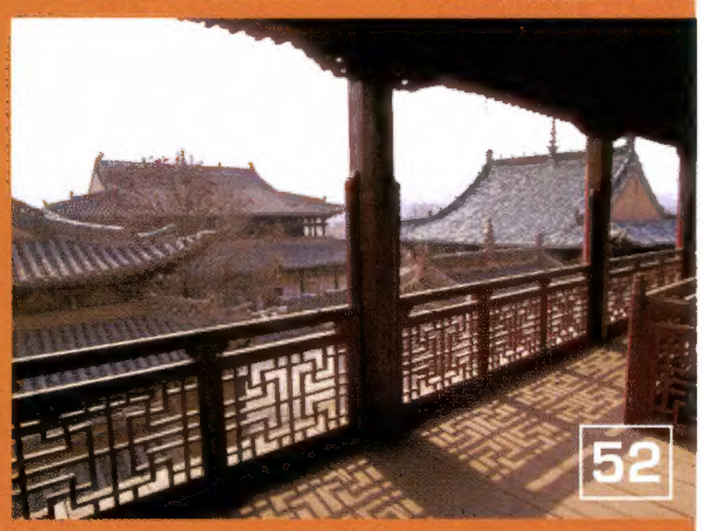
Among numerous Chinese celebrations, the Spring Festival is regarded as the most important. Preparations for the new year begins from late 12th month in the last lunar year to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first lunar month in the new year. The Spring Festival has a special meaning to the people of northern Shaanxi Province where the striking Loess Plateau locates. Around the new year month, they will be busy with visiting relatives and friends, playing unique Chinese horn music, performing jubilant *yangge* or waist-drum dances, as well as holding breath-taking sacrificial ceremonies.

44 City Snaps

Everchanging Hangzhou

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

Ten years ago when the famous Zhejiang capital city, Hangzhou, was still unfamiliar to the world, it was already the paradise of many Chinese. Nowadays, with the reputation of "best residential environment" and "International Garden City", Hangzhou has rapidly been developed into a modern Chinese metropolis, with renovated historical structures and westernised malls or coffee shops.



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Ups and Downs of Historic Chieftains' Offices

Photos & article by Shi Baoxiu

The "tusi" (chieftain) system was established by the central governments of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties to unite and control the ethnic minorities in Northwest and Southwest China. In its prime time, the manor of the chieftains had even reached the area of Qinghai Province. Luckily, their offices located deep in the mountains of Liancheng Town, Gansu Province, are well remained today, in which the locals can pass on legends of "tusi" to the new generation.

58 Bed & Board

Overnighting with White Tigers — Stay at the Guangzhou Chime Long Hotel

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Chinese New Year on Loess Plateau	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Everchanging Hangzhou	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Ups & Downs of Historic Chieftains' Offices	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Stay at Guangzhou Chime Long Hotel	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Dedicated to Her Cause: Rebecca Li	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Others: _____	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Cover	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Articles	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
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Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

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Dedicated to Her Cause: Rebecca Li

Article by Dianna Lau

Not every one has that strong dedication in realising one's dream like Rebecca Li Lok Si — who has given up chances to make money in such a commercial society as Hong Kong and unconditionally devoted in research work in polar areas. In an interview with Rebecca, readers can get more understanding of her daily life, expectations, pains, and hopes.

66 Photography

Early Snow at the Great Wall

Photos & article by Xu Xiong

70 Excursions

Shenzhen Day Trips — Three Top Picks

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong, Zheng Ting

Though Shenzhen is a famous weekend excursion of Hong Kong residents, few may have visited the time-honoured city of Dapeng. Besides, the Minsk aircraft carrier has already proudly berthed at Shatoujiao Beach in the economic zone, where visitors can appreciate advanced scientific technology and magnificent traditional performances from Russia. Nature lovers, however, will find their haven on earth in the refreshing Waterlands Park.

Performers standing on high stilts
(by Li Kesheng)

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China's 10 Famous Skiing Resorts

Edited by Kristy Wong, Zuo Jun

The snow season in North or Northeast China falls from November to next year's April. We have highlighted 10 famous skiing resorts in China for you, where you can enjoy interesting skiing and other winter activities by paying at reasonable prices.

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Paper-cuttings of northern Shaanxi
Photo by Hu Wugong

FROM THE EDITOR

A New Year, A New Look

At the Chinese New Year, with all the promise that implies, we would like to wish all our readers the very best for the coming year. We thank them for their support over the past 12 months and, as might be appropriate at a time of renewal, draw attention to improvements in the magazine.

While we are, in all modesty, proud of China Tourism there is always room for progress so 2003 will see brighter, more attractive layouts and design, and new columns that will reflect readers' interests. We welcome your feedback (so feel free) but are confident the up-to-the-minute information in City Snaps, Travel Gear, and Bed & Board, and the inspirational characters you will meet in Profile will broaden horizons and further whet appetites for travel. More than ever China has to so much to offer the discerning tourist and intrepid traveller.

For this month's cover feature we travel north to the Loess Plateau of Shaanxi. At first sight these dusty hills might have less to offer than some more high profile tourist destinations. But, as the story on the Lunar New Year, Spring Festival celebrations in Shaanxi emphasises, this is the birthplace of Chinese civilization. From this land of yellow earth sprang written Chinese history, a history that is literally impregnated in the very soil and rocks of this heroic landscape. The emperors may be gone, but the people endure and welcome the coming of spring in their own spectacular fashion.

Marvellous Hong Kong from Helicopter

Ever thought of getting a bird's-eye view of the fascinating skyline and scenery of Hong Kong's territory from a helicopter? Now you have the opportunity for this unforgettable experience.

Launched by HeliHongKong (Helicopters Hong Kong Ltd.), the "Marvellous View from the Helicopter" flights have been highly popular with the public since they began. HeliHongKong provides both FIT and chartered flights. The helicopter leaves at 3 p.m. sharp every day from the Central Heliport opposite the Timar Site.

The route of the 12-minute trip is: Kowloon Peninsular → Kwai Chung Container Terminal → Tsing Yi → Ocean Park → Happy Valley → Central Heliport. For the chartered flight, there are three routes (A, B, and C). Route A (12 minutes) is the same as the FIT program. Route B (30 minutes): Tsing Yi → Discovery Bay → Big Buddha → Ocean Park → Stanley → Lei Yue Mun. Route C (60 minutes): Sai Kung → boundary between Mainland China and Hong Kong → Kwai Chung Container Terminal → Tsing Yi → Big Buddha → Ocean Park → Lei Yue Mun.

The helicopter is a comfortable six-seater AS 350B3 (Eurocopter AS 350 B3). Before boarding the helicopter, specialist staff weigh the passengers to arrange appropriate seats. Escape procedures will also be explained in detail. During departure and landing, staff show passengers the correct procedures.

Now an attractive opportunity is available for "Marvellous View From the Helicopter". In the Buy 2 Get 1 Free Promotional Offer, each person is being charged only HK$ 534! For a chartered flight, Route A costs only HK$ 3,000, Route B HK$ 4,900, and Route C HK$ 9,800. So don't miss such a golden chance for a unique view of Hong Kong from the air. Inquiry no. for reservations: (852) 2108 9916/ 2108 9917

HeliHongKong has also opened a helicopter shuttle service between Macao (Macao Maritime Terminal), Shenzhen (Bao'an International Airport), and Hong Kong (HK Macao Ferry Terminal), and chartered flights between Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

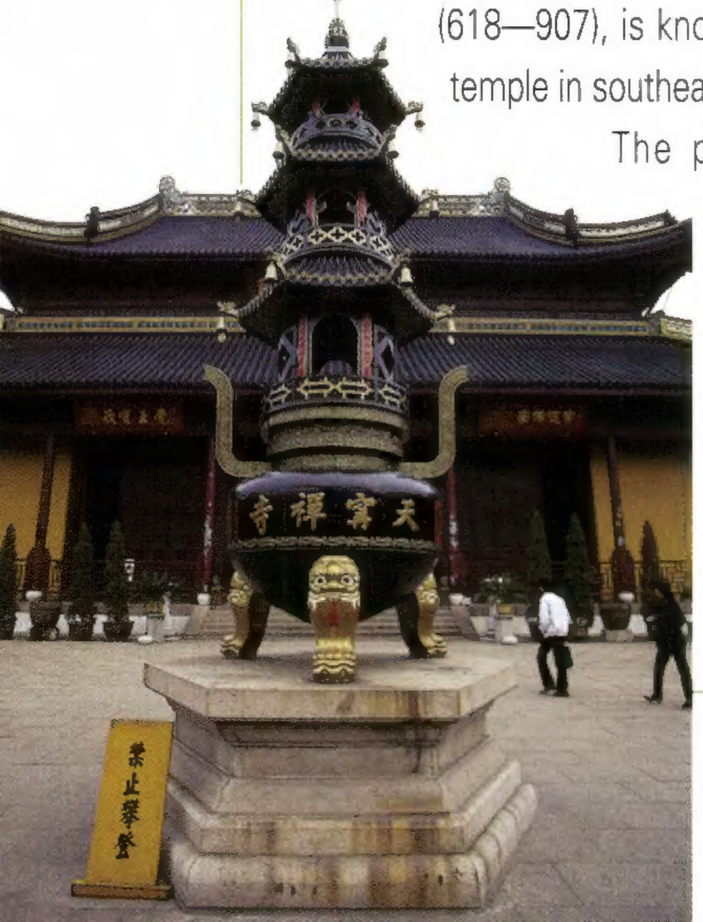
To get more up-to-date information, please call: HK~(852) 2108 9898; Macao~(853) 727288; Shenzhen~(755) 2777 8333.

Website of HeliHongKong: www.helihongkong.com

Changzhou to Build Country's Tallest Pagoda

A pagoda of 153.79 metres high, the tallest of its kind in China, is planned to be built in the Tianning (Heavenly Peace) Temple in Changzhou City, East China's Jiangsu Province.

Tianning Temple, a local Buddhist temple, originally built during the Zhengguan and Yonghui periods (627—655) of the Tang Dynasty (618—907), is known as the "No.1 temple in southeast China".



The pagoda project, with an estimated cost of 150 million yuan (US$ 18 million) is scheduled to be completed in 2004.

China Strives to Protect Natural Scenes

China's construction and tourism departments have come to realise it is high time to stop random development in scenic areas.

The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, for example, has drafted measures to regulate building in scenic areas as long as four years ago. The famous Yintan (Silver) Beach, owns a number of more than 3.5 million tourists from China and overseas each year. When it was first developed in the early 1990s, several dozen buildings sprang up in the beach area in a period of no more than a year. In recent years, however, visitors have found a host of primitive plants have been missing, soil erosion has accelerated, and the sand is turning black and beach becomes so flat and dull. In 2002, the Beihai city government launched a project to demolish all 33 buildings and other structures in the beach area to restore its unique, vivid natural beauty. The city also aims to build the beach into a tourism attraction highlighting ecological protection, where people can relax or indulge in leisurely recreational and sporting activities.

Hunan Province, in Central-South China, plans to spend one billion yuan (US$ 120 million) pulling down all buildings with an area of 340,000 square metres in the prestigious Zhangjiajie Nature Reserve at the Wulingyuan Scenic Area, which is on the World Natural Heritage list. East China's Jiangxi Province and Sichuan Province in the Southwest have demolished buildings worth 20 million yuan in the renowned Lushan Mountain Scenic Area and invested nearly 100 million yuan on improving the environment at Mt. Emei respectively.

Historical Park to Be Built at China's First Emperor's Mausoleum

Northwest China's Shaanxi Province has planned to invest 553 million yuan (US$ 66.6 million) in building a historical park at the site of the Mausoleum of Emperor Qinshihuang (259—210 B.C.), the first emperor of China's feudal dynasties. The project is expected to be completed in 2005.

The local government plans to requisition more than 2,900 *mu* (193 hectares) of land and afforest an area of more than 3.2 square kilometres in the park and the surrounding areas. Three villages, including 1,007 families and 24 enterprises, located on the site of the future historical park, will be relocated outside the protection zone for cultural relics, and two museums will be set up.

The mausoleum was officially recognised as World Cultural Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1987.

Guangdong to Build New Provincial Museum

Guangdong Province is to build a new provincial museum at an expected cost of almost one billion yuan (US$ 120 million).

The Construction is underway on a 50-metre high building and a floor space of 15,000 and 60,000 square metres respectively. Upon completion, historic, cultural, natural, artistic, calligraphy, porcelain, craftwork, ink stone and root-carving exhibits will be displayed.

Meanwhile, a storeroom has been designed for the preservation of more than 120,000 historical and cultural relics of the province.

Xinjiang Airlines Marks Best Safe Flight Record

In early January, the Xinjiang Airlines has completed 48 years of safe flying as its flight No. XO 0508 safely landed, which marked China's longest safe flight record.

Its reputation once suffered in 1985 when the airline introduced six foreign planes in 1992 through "wet leasing", an arrangement which includes the leasing of planes, their crew members and ground and aircraft maintenance staff. However, it proved trustworthy by adhering to strict security measures.

The company now owns 23 passenger planes, serving 86 domestic air routes and eight international ones. The total air mileage had surpassed 170,000 km. According to an official of the Xinjiang Civil Aviation Administration Office, safety has been the airline's top priority ever since its establishment in 1957.

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Longmen Grottoes: A Great Treasure of Stone Carving in China

The Longmen Grottoes are scattered around Mt. Yique, 12 km from Luoyang City, capital of Henan Province. The Yishui River divides Mt. Yique into Xiangshan (Fragrant Hill) in the east and Longmenshan (Dragon Gate Hill) in the west. Hence the grottoes are also called the "Yique Grottoes". Since they were created later than the Mogao and Yungang grottoes which contain strong Indian or Greek cultural influences, the Longmen Grottoes reflect the wealth of Chinese art. Murals inside the grottoes also illustrate in detail the then political, economic and social environment.

Today there are 2,345 caves, more than 2,800 tablets and inscriptions, 40-plus Buddhist pagodas, and more than 100,000 Buddhist statues on Xiangshan and Longmenshan.

Together with the Mogao and Yungang grottoes, the Longmen Grottoes are known as China's "Three Stone-Carving Art Treasures".

Main attractions: Binyang Cave, Guyang Cave, Fengxian Temple, Lianhua Cave. Transport: Fly to Luoyang, then go by bus to the Longmen Grottoes. Admission: 60 yuan Websites: www.longmen.gov.cn/ www.lytour.gov.cn

Korean Air Opens More Routes

Korean Air recently announced plans to operate two new routes between China and South Korea: Cheongju — Shanghai and Busan — Xi'an — to meet the increased demand for travel between the two countries.

Three weekly flights (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) between Cheiongju and Shanghai, and two weekly flights (Monday and Thursday) between Busan and Xi'an, started operating in mid-January.

With the new routes, Korean Air operates 17 routes to 12 destinations with a weekly total of 75 flights to China.

Ming Dynasty Great Wall Brick Kilns Discovered

A total of 48 brick kilns for the construction of Great Wall during the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644) were recently discovered near the starting point of the Wall.

The site, located in Banchangyu Village in Shijiazhuang, 28 km from Qinhuangdao City in North China's Hebei Province. The village is located near Shanhaiguan Pass, the first pass of the Great Wall built during the Ming Dynasty. Experts believe that the kilns were used to make bricks for the Great Wall. They are the oldest kilns of this type ever to be discovered in China and will contribute greatly to the study of the Great Wall. Found beneath a corn field of 200 *mu* (about 13.3 hectares), the kilns contained bricks 36 cm in length, 17 cm wide and 9 cm thick, weighing about 10.5 kg each. Twenty-four of the kilns are each packed with over 5,000 bricks.

Stone Forest, Yunnan

Travel to Yunnan in Early Spring

January to March is the best time for a family to tour Yunnan. Here is a recommended itinerary:

Day 1 Set off from Kunming, arrive Jianshui before noon. Stay in Lin'an Hotel (standard room: 120 yuan/ day), or Zhujia Garden (standard room: 280~380 yuan/ day). In the afternoon, visit the Zhujia Garden, Confucius Temple and ancient wells in Jianshui. Also pay a visit to Tuanshan Village and have a delicious authentic dinner there. Stay in Jianshui overnight.

Day 2 Set off from Jianshui in the morning, arriving at the time-honoured county seat of Yuanyang before noon. Lodge at the Government Reception Centre (the best place to stay in Yuanyang so far. Standard room: 120 yuan/ day). After lunch, visit Yuanyang. Take a bus to Panzhihua to watch Laohuzui (Tiger Mouth) around 4 p.m. Have dinner in Yuanyang.

Day 3 Take a bus to Duoyei Village via Shengcui Township to watch the terraced fields at sunrise about 7 a.m. In fine weather, the terraced fields reflect the flaming colours. The mushroom-shaped houses of the Hani people appear quite lovely through the layers of morning mist. In the afternoon, after lunch in Yuanyang, bus to Shilin and stay overnight (standard room: 100 yuan/ day).

Day 4 Join a local tour of the Shilin (Stone Forest) Scenic Area in the morning. Travel to Luliang at 3 p.m. and stay at the County City Government Reception Hall (standard room: 100 yuan/ day).

Day 5 Admire the colourful sand sculptures in Luliang. Bus to Luoping in the afternoon. The county seat offers a range of hotels (standard room: 100 yuan/ day). Savour the domestic Duoyei chafing dishes at night.

Days 6 & 7 Enjoy such scenic sights as Jiulong (Nine Dragons) Waterfalls, vast fields of rape flowers, Lesser Three Gorges, and the Duoyei River.

Day 8 Go by bus to Kunming. Taxi or jeep hire in Kunming: 300~400 yuan/ day. Inquiry no.: (871) 3535 940/ 3128 034/ 7166 079

Late Chinese Thinker's Residence Opens to Public

The residence of the late Chinese thinker Yan Fu (1853—1921) has been renovated and opened to the public on early January. Built in 1867 in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, Yan's residence covers a total area of 625 square metres. The one-year renovation project cost one million yuan, in which Yan's pictures, documents and books are displayed in two halls.

Born in 1854, Yan was a scholar known for advocating western learning in the late 19th century in China. He was the first to translate British naturalist Charles R. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* into the Chinese language. Hid translation of Thomas H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* had yielded much influence on the thinking of contemporary scholars at that time. Yan studied in a British naval university and became the principal of China's naval school of the Qing Dynasty (1644—1911) on his return. He later was appointed the first President of the prestigious Peking University, now Beijing University.

Joining Eco-tours to Mai Po

The Hong Kong territory feasts tourists sight not only by its striking architecture, but also the natural scenery. Mai Po located in Fanling in the New Territories is one of the best examples. The wetlands in and around the Mai Po Nature Reserve are most famous for its birds. Some 72% of all the bird species recorded in Hong Kong have been found in the area. The reserve also holds internationally important numbers of certain bird species, some of which are highly endangered. For instance, the Siberian Crane was the first time to be discovered at Mai Po in the morning on 11 December, 2002. There are about 2,500~3,000 Siberian Cranes in the world and most spend the winter in the Yangtse Valley, some 800 km to the north of Hong Kong.

Since the Mai Po Nature Reserve is a legally restricted area within the HKSAR, all public visitors who wish to enter the Mai Po Nature Reserve must either possess a valid Hong Kong SAR Government Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) permit or join a WWF Hong Kong guided public visit.

The World Wildlife Fund Hong Kong (WWF) organises public visits on weekends and Public Holidays. Each tour lasts about three hours and visitors will be shown around the unique "gei wais" (a pond enclosed by a bund for raising shrimps, oyster, and fishes), observation hides, Wildlife Education Centre and Waterfowl Collection. The application form (English/ Chinese) can be downloaded from the website of WWF (www.wwf.org.hk/). Fees: HK$70/ person. Hire of binoculars: HK$20/ pair. Phone booking (up to three months in advance): (852) 2526 4473

Recently, the WWF is constructing Hong Kong's first Marine Life Centre at Hoi Ha Wan in Sai Kung, which is expected to open in late 2003. Interested parties can join the Coral Tree Campaign, in which one's name will be inscribed on one of the fish plaques on the Coral Tree. The plaques will be displayed at the main entrance to the new Hoi Ha Marine Life Centre. Participants may also have a chance to visit the centre before its official opening.

DIY Tour to Mt. Wumeng Scenic Area

Sandwiched between Guizhou and Yunnan provinces in West China, Mt. Wumeng is a continuation of the East Yunnan Plateau. Despite its high altitude — Guizhou's tallest peak, Feicaiping at 2,900 metres above sea level is found in this area — Wumeng's landscapes are of rolling hills. It features lyrical views of vegetation, fields and red earth rather than striking mountain ranges.

Ecosystem: Tourists shouldn't miss the Weining Yi-Hui-Miao Autonomous County located in the Mt Wumeng area, with its vast expanse of delicate "grass sea". This is Guizhou's largest natural freshwater lake, lying at an altitude of 2,172 metres and southwest of the county seat. The 50-sq-km nature reserve under state protection has a wealth of aquatic animals and plants such as fish, shrimps and cattails. Noted as "a kingdom of birds", the area is home to 155 species including the white crane, hooded crane, black crane, falcon, and the black-necked crane which is regarded as a "national treasure". The black-necked crane is the only one among the 15 kinds of cranes in the world that lives in highland areas. However if you are intending to photograph the birds, remember not to wear brightly coloured clothes. Inquiry number for the grass sea administration: (857) 6222 220.

Transport: Fly to Guiyang, capital city of Guizhou Province, then go by train to Liupanshui (fare for hard sleeper: about 41 yuan). Next day, catch a bus to Weining, 81 km from Liupanshui.

Accommodation: The county provides reasonable accommodation. Tourists can stay in the two-starred Weining Jiangong Hotel (Tel: 857-6224 438) or one-starred Jinsui Hotel (Tel: 857-6226 420)

Climate: Under the influence of subtropical southwest monsoon winds, the area is neither freezing cold in winter nor burning hot in summer, with an average temperature of 11.6°C, and minimum of 3~4°C.

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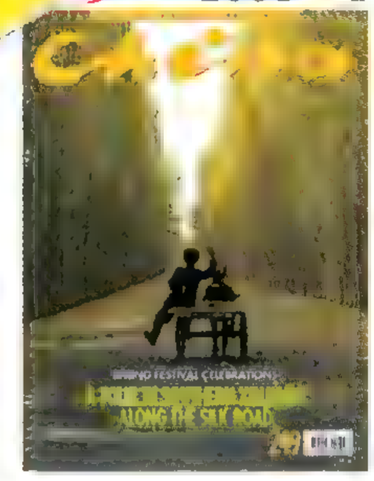

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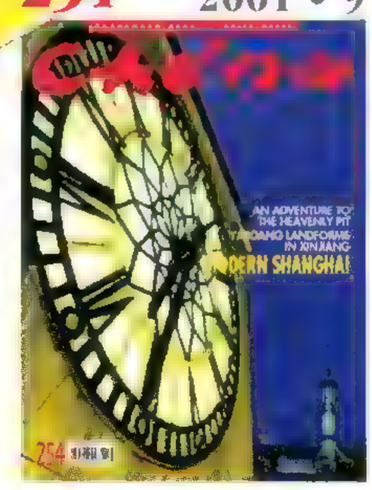

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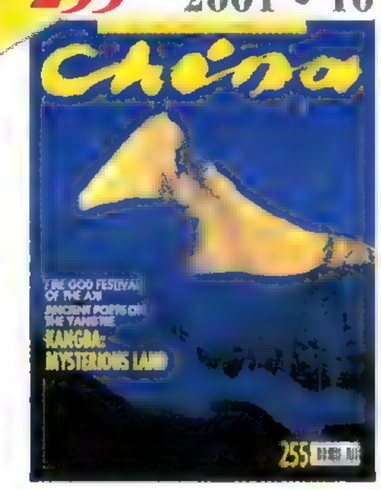

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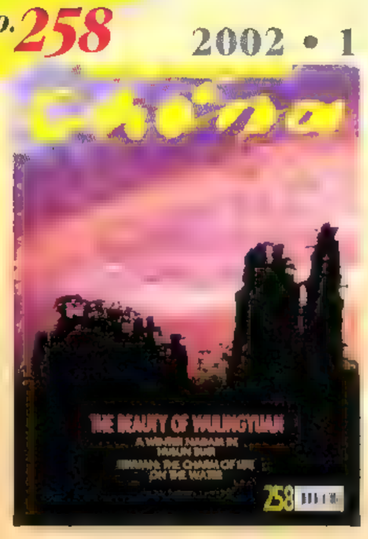

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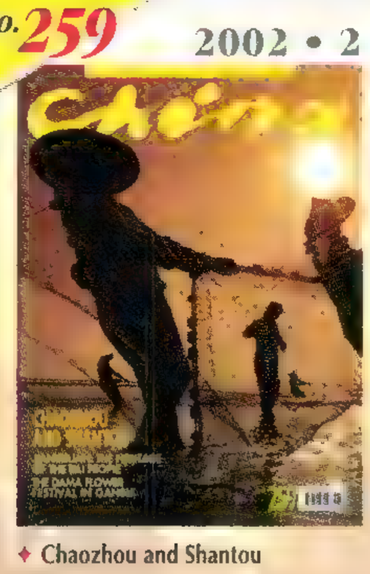

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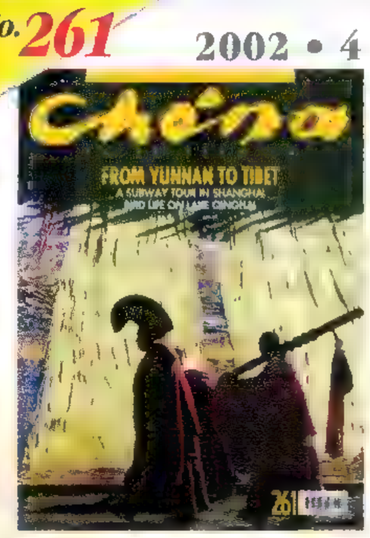

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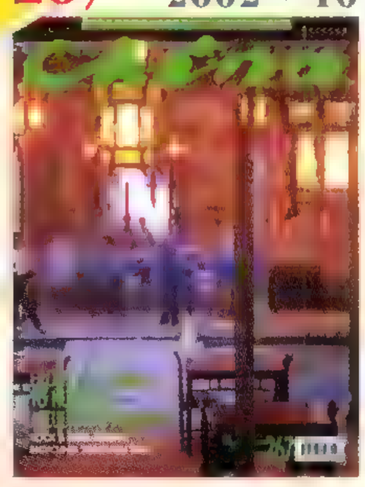

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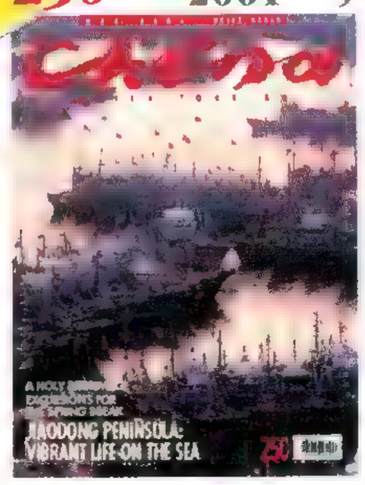

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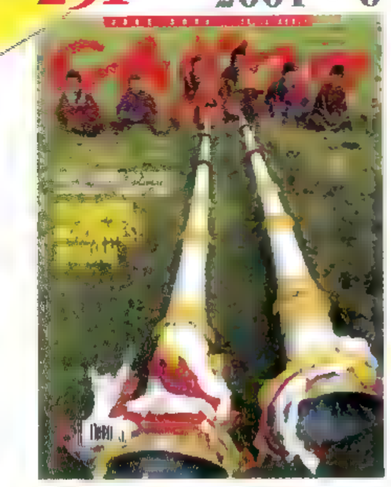

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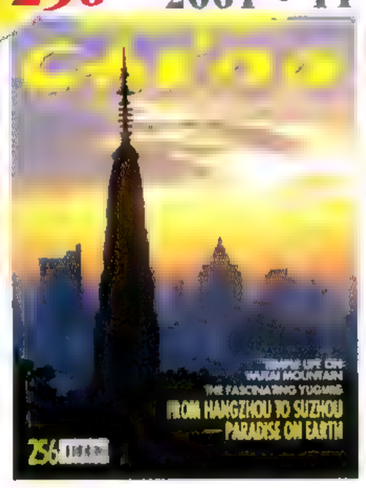

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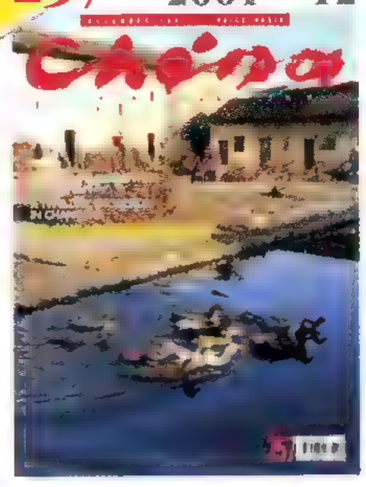

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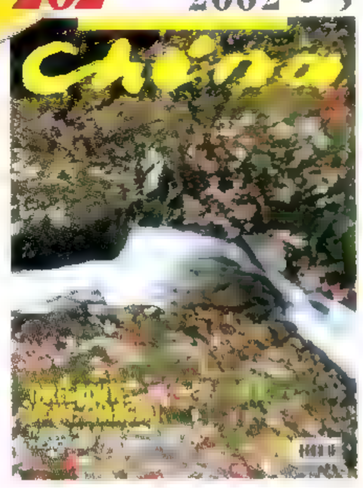

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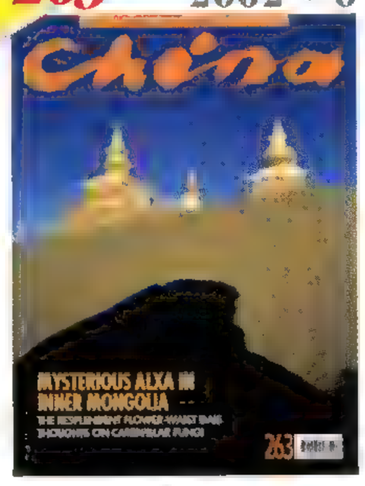

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FEATURE STORY

GREETING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR ON THE LOESS PLATEAU

Photos by Huang Xinli, Shi Baoxiu, Wang Pei, & others

Article by Huang Xinli, Shi Baoxiu, Hu Jun

When I flew by aeroplane between Lanzhou in Gansu Province and Beijing, I saw Shaanxi's Loess Plateau from the air. Looking out of the window, I saw rolling yellow waves, their vastness stirring my soul. In the endless yellow sea lie the hills and gullies of the loess, the birthplace of the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization. From this land of yellow earth sprang written Chinese history. Rulers of the Zhou, Qin, Han and Tang dynasties, as well as the legendary emperors of Yandi and Huangdi, all reached their brilliant heights here.

Five thousand years have passed and the Loess Plateau piled on yellow earth remains as thick as ever. Ancient emperors died one after another as the dynasties mercilessly changed, leaving only looted tombs as reminders of past glory.

But the people are still here, always have been, always will be. The "northwest wind", the vitally dynamic folklore of the loess, has passed down from generation to generation. Look at the energetic *yangge* and waist-drum dances, the sacrificial ceremonies held to worship heaven and earth, gods and ancestors, and the inspiring sound of the high-pitched *suona* (Chinese horn), plus the New Year couplets, paper-cuts, New Year pictures and colourfully decorated steamed buns. These traditions for celebrating the Spring Festival have united the people who ensure the history rolls on.

THE FIRST LUNAR MONTH IN NORTHERN SHAANXI

China has numerous festivals, as the saying goes: "Seven big festivals, eight small celebrations, as well as 24 mini occasions." Among all these, Spring Festival, or the Chinese New Year, is the most important. Its celebration begins from the 23rd day of the 12th month in the Chinese lunar calendar, a day marked as the "Minor New Year", and lasts until the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first lunar month of the New Year. Now people can have a break from their daily round with relief because they have not only celebrated the New Year but also greeted the coming spring.

Spring Festival has a special meaning to the people of northern Shaanxi. As soon as they enter the first lunar month after a full month's preparation, they busy themselves with such activities as visiting relatives, seeing friends, playing musical instruments, dating their loved ones, performing local opera and holding various sacrificial ceremonies.

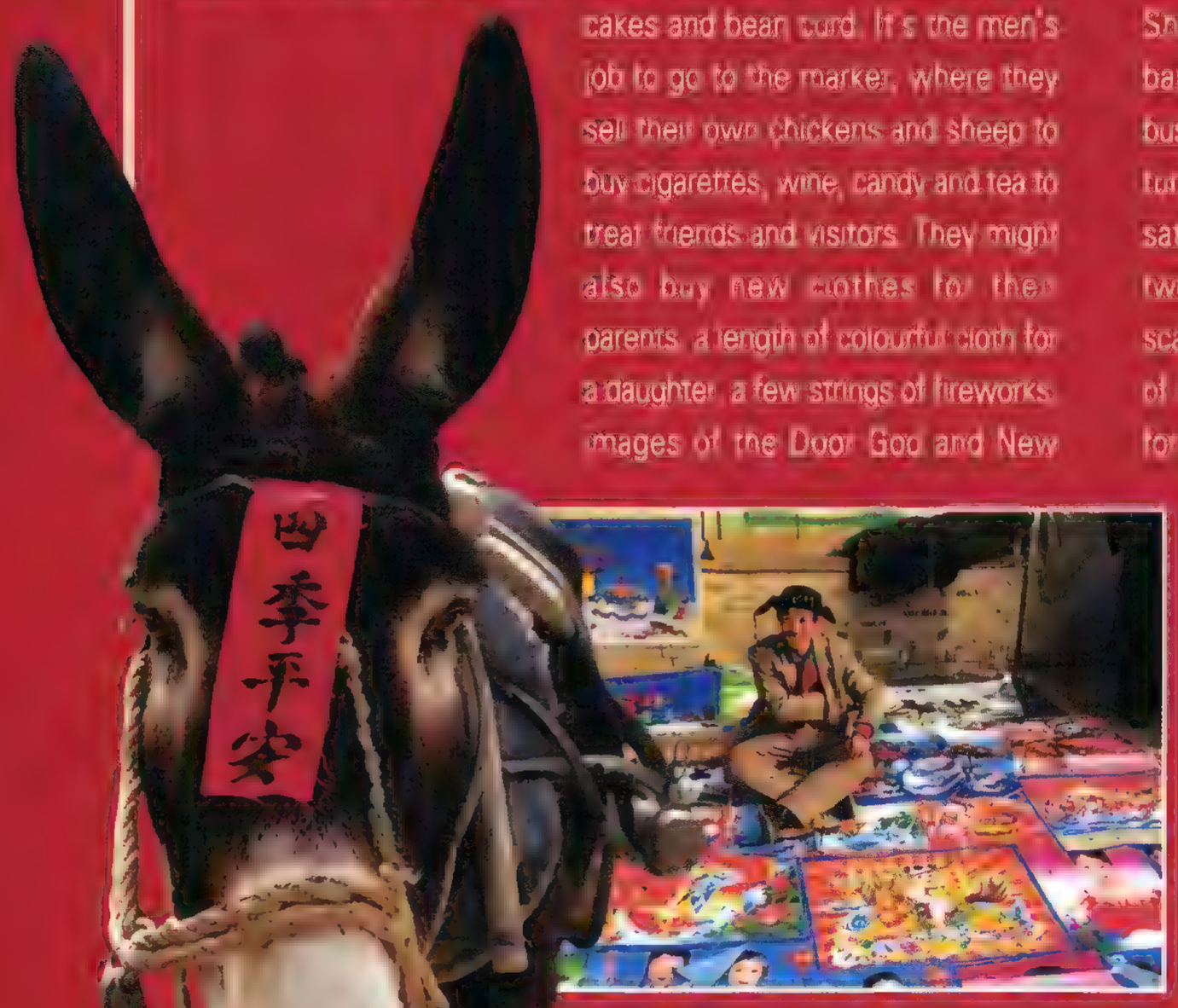
THE MINOR NEW YEAR

The Busy 12th Lunar Month: I took a bus north from Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province. It is the custom that no matter how far away you may be, you must go back to your hometown to be with your family on this occasion. Outside the bus window, the rural scenery passed. Like New Year pictures, the scenes were of vibrant rural lives. In front of a cave dwelling, a woman was driving a donkey which was working a stone grinder. She was preparing flour for making cakes. At a roadside market, people hurried here and there for their New Year shopping, making the quiet village bustle in the slow winter's day.

As the New Year approaches, rural women are always the most hardworking. They take care of the family's clothing and cooking, and clean the house, as well as making steamed buns, rice wine, fried cakes and bean curd. It's the men's job to go to the market, where they sell their own chickens and sheep to buy cigarettes, wine, candy and tea to treat friends and visitors. They might also buy new clothes for their parents, a length of colourful cloth for a daughter, a few strings of fireworks, images of the Door God and New Year pictures of other subjects for decorating the house.

Seeing Off the Kitchen God: The 23rd day of the 12th lunar month is the time to see the Kitchen God off to heaven. This god has the lowest status among all the gods, but he is also the one who stays closest to the people. In northern Shaanxi, people enshrine both the Kitchen God and his wife, making a god's life like a human's.

Northern Shaanxi people popularly believe that "with or without money, you cannot spend the New Year with your hair on". So a rule exists that before New Year comes, all men have their heads shaved and all women have their hair cut. In Xizhen, a market town beside the Yellow River in Jiaxian County, Shaanxi, I saw seven or eight barber's stands set in a row for business. Customers waited for their turn. The barbers were busy. They satisfied their customers with the two most popular hairstyles: a bare scalp for older men and just a patch of hair left on the front of the head for little boys.



1st opening page: Waist-drum dancers raise dust performing on the Yellow Loess (by Fang Haifeng)
2nd opening page: The Yellow River forms a natural barrier between Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces (by Shi Baoxiu)
Previous left page: Teams of folk art performers from different villages and towns (by Shi Baoxiu)
Previous right page: These wooden legs at 3.2 metres long are each made from willow tree (by Li Kesheng)
1. Northern Shaanxi's rural people paste good luck signs even on the foreheads of animals (by Huang Xinli)
2. New Year prints are hot items before the Spring Festival
3. An old-fashioned haircut is still popular at temple fairs in rural areas (by Ma Xiangqun)
4. Paper-cuts go up on windows on the Spring Festival eve (by Wang Miao)

THE NEW YEAR EVE

Pasting window papercuts: The women of northern Shaanxi are born artists. It only takes them a few minutes to cut peonies, pomegranates, roosters and many other patterns out of coloured paper. Making good paper-cuts has become a virtue for a woman. If a family has fine paper-cuts pasted on its windows, their daughter will certainly attract wide admiration from the young men in the village.

After pasting paper-cuts on the windows, they have to put couplets on every door. Even such items as the stone grinder and chicken coop must be decorated with auspicious words written on red paper. Every household also hangs red lanterns on their front gates.

New Year's Eve Dinner: Apart from dishes of chicken, duck, fish and pork, there must be mutton stewed with rice noodles and the homemade drink -wine made from broomcorn millet. The number of dishes must be even, to symbolize prosperity for the next year. Before eating the dinner, people set off fireworks, burn incense and worship gods and their ancestors. While enjoying their food and wine, the diners sing folk melodies. It is traditional for people stay up all night on New Year's Eve. The adults also put fireworks, garlic, cookies and pocket money under the children's pillows. Courtyard lights should be kept on all night long.

WRITER'S COMMENTS:

I have an intuitive bond with northern Shaanxi. During my childhood, my family moved from southern China, where spring lasts all year round, to the loess as my father was posted there. After we arrived, both my elder brother and younger sister became sick because they could not adapt to the new environment but I stayed in good health. Those days while talking fluently with the locals in their dialect, I am often mistaken for a native. That is why photographers like to invite me to be their companion while travelling to northern Shaanxi.

I began taking photos of New Year celebrations in northern Shaanxi some years ago. Every year, I told my family I would not do this the following year, but year after year, I repeated the same words. I regretted not being able to stay with my family at the time for reunion.

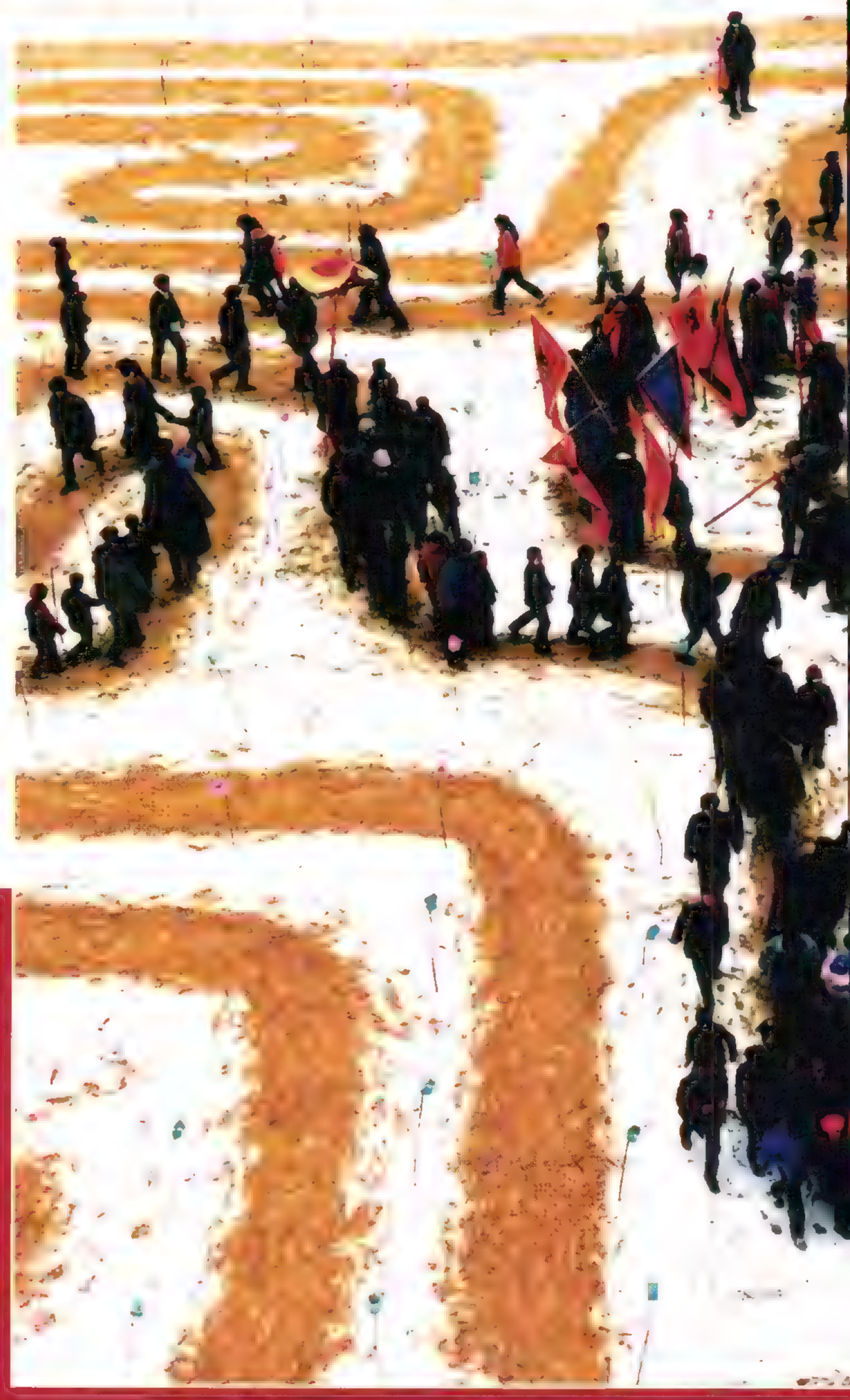
Northern Shaanxi people are busiest in the days before the Spring Festival. During this period, they do their New Year shopping, worship gods, pay tribute to their ancestors and hold weddings. Every year during this period, I used to leave home for northern Shaanxi. There I have had all kinds of experiences, being robbed, my money stolen, and even a car accident. In the years before local transport became convenient, I travelled by bicycle, crossing the hills and rivers from village to market town. Once I spent a long night in a blizzard in an abandoned temple, shivering in my sleeping bag. Of course, there were many moving stories too, like the time I was ill and the simple and honest local people took good care of me. There were also moments of satisfaction. One night, I travelled 80 km on a mountain trail to take photos of folk customs. The pleasure of success was incomparable.

Each time I returned to the city, I began missing the New Year celebrations in northern Shaanxi. Then I would start planning my next trip.

Huang Xinli

THE FIRST LUNAR MONTH IN

NORTHERN SHAANXI



NEW YEAR'S DAY

Eating Dumplings and Worshipping the Three Emperors: After the cock crows herald dawn on the first day of the first lunar month, people begin to let off their fireworks. Meanwhile, the women make jiaozi, or dumplings. They put coins in some of the dumplings, believed to bring happiness and good fortune to those lucky enough to find them. After this early meal, everyone dons their new clothes and all the family members go together to visit the Sanhuang (Three Emperors) Temple. The temple at Yuxiang Township in Jiaxian is built on a solitary ridge standing by the Yellow River. Worshippers put offerings and burning incense on the table in front of the shrines. They had pasted a whole layer of red couplets on the temple gate. Still more and more villagers arrived, following the sounds of the drums and *suona*. By presenting incense and kowtowing they hoped to secure a good harvest in the year ahead. After worshipping the three emperors, the senior villagers assembled, they analyzed the weather situation and predicted the harvest. Worshipping the three emperors is said to really work.

DAY 3

Yangge Dance: The second day of the New Year is for visiting relatives, and all married women go back to their parents' homes. On the third day, the young villagers who have had enough wining and dining, dance the *yangge* to take their New Year greetings from house to house.

I arrived in Dajihan Village in Yulin, a community famous for its *yangge* dance, on the early morning of the third day of the first month. In the village, I saw the team leader carrying a drum and a gong as he roamed through the streets. On hearing the sound of the drum and gong, his team members showed up. They were all young men, some of them dressed up

DAY 7

Walking Around Nine Bends: It was snowing and already a thick layer of snow lay on the ground. The seventh day of the first lunar month is a day for farmers in Gaojiamao Village to greet the arrival of spring by walking around nine bends. On open ground to the west of the village, people from surrounding villages gathered to take part in the activity.

Climbing up the hill opposite I watched the villagers — old and young, men and women, headed by monks, banner holders, band players and *yangge* dancers — walk along a makeshift nine-bend pathway. Everybody was happy and I could hear some people laughing. Like a New Year picture, they vividly demonstrated the traditional local New Year celebration.

The so-called "nine bends" are nine squares made of 361 po es. A lantern made from a potato or turnip donated by the farmers, is hung from every pole. When lit in the evening, these lanterns looked as beautiful as shining diamonds.

The local people believe that by walking around the nine bends one can live up to 99 years old. While doing so, they also prayed to the gods to protect them and let them have a fortunate year.

1. ***Suona*** **players blow hard so the music can carry their blessings faraway**
2. **Young performers watch other celebrations on TV**
3. **After walking around the nine bends it's said one might live to 99**
4. **A meal in the temple after the *yangge* dancing is believed to prevent hunger in the year ahead**
5. **Visiting relatives and friends on the third new year day**

as young women and old ladies, others wore white turbans on their heads, white shirts and green pants. All carried a drum made of willow wood at the waist. Each of the 28 dancers represented one of the 28 constellations. After an explosion of fireworks, the *yangge* team went first to the temple to worship and entertain the gods. Then they wandered through the streets and lanes, offering greetings to each household. After the host let off fireworks to say good-bye to the dancers, the team moved on to the next household.

4

5

THE FIRST LUNAR MONTH IN

NORTHERN SHAANXI

DAY 7

Sacrifices: About 100 wooden trays displayed a range of exquisitely made sacrificial items in various shapes such as small pigs, lambs, red peaches and green grapes.

The strong, young men who carried these trays on their heads, solemnly walked along the ridges and in the gullies. I saw the scene on my way from Yulin to Jiaxian and was deeply moved. A local man told me the ceremony was held to ward off evil spirits and pray for happiness.

During this ceremony, the villagers made three sacrifices in a day, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. The first must be made at dawn; the second exactly at noon; and the third before the lights were turned off. Young men had to lead the ceremony, no woman, child or old person was allowed.

On the day of the ceremony, people first paid their respects to the Oriental Kitchen God before bringing out the sacrificial items they had taken many days to prepare. A monk led the villagers as they kowtowed in different directions. As the procession moved over the loess with banner holders, monks and trumpet players leading the

way, it looked like a huge snake crawling on the yellow earth. It was a primitive belief, a touching scene.

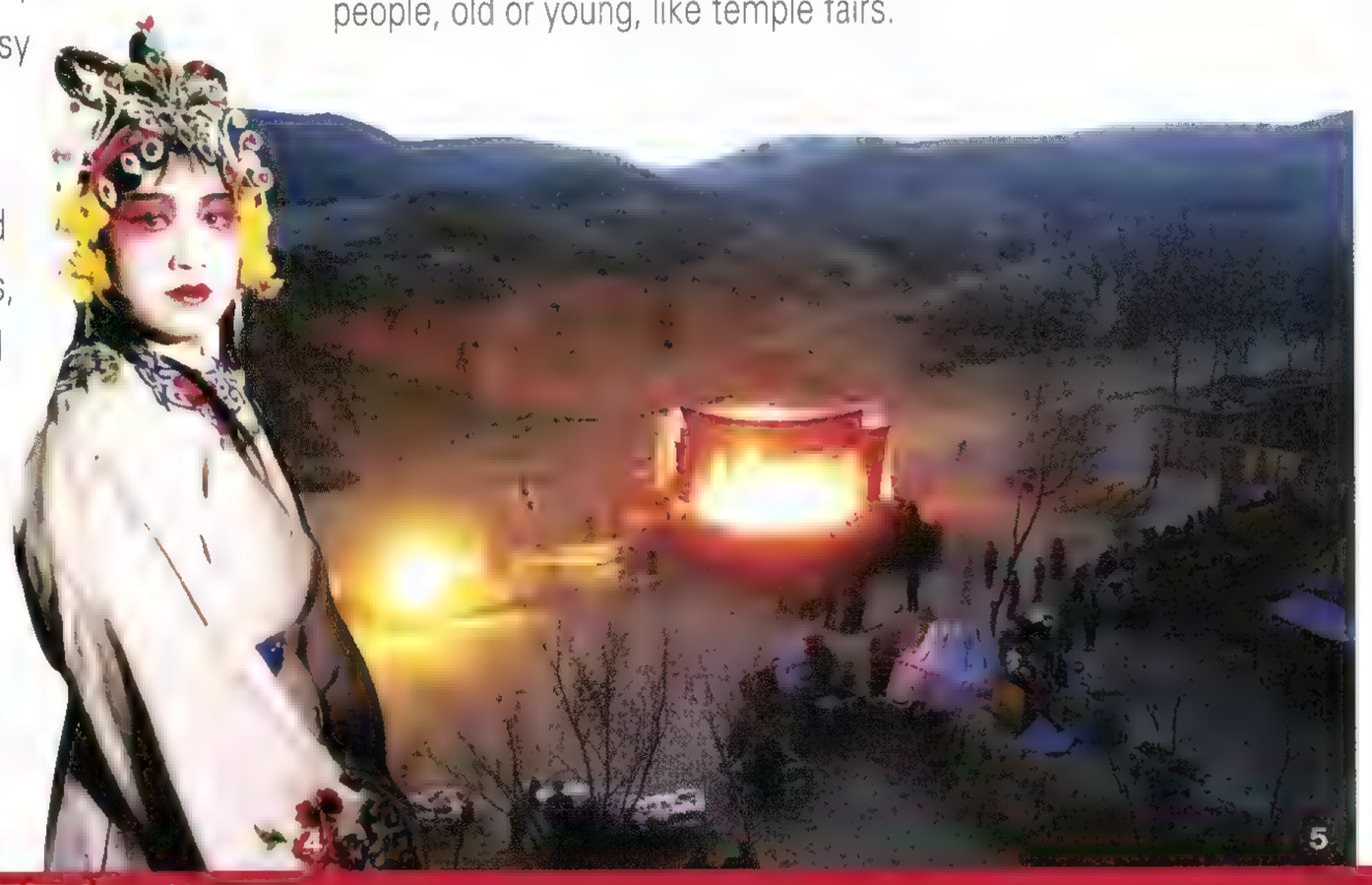
Temple Fairs: Many temple fairs are held in the first lunar month in northern Shaanxi. At Baiyun (White Cloud) Hill, the pilgrims coming and going turned the hill into a noisy market place.

As well as the major temple fairs, there are also numerous minor ones. Some do not even have a fixed site and date. The fair is held in turn in different villages, which means some villages have to wait for several dozen years for their turn. Some temple fairs, though small, are held regularly every year on a set date. One activity common to all these events is the construction of a makeshift stage in an open space, which draws people from the surrounding villages.

In northern Shaanxi it's said "the first month is busiest for two groups", referring to the folk music band and the local opera troupe. The band is needed for every part of the New Year celebrations. The opera troupe mainly performs at temple fairs which usually run for three days, so the opera is staged for three days too. The actors and actresses stay on stage from morning till midnight, even during breaks for eating and drinking. They often run from one temple fair to another.

Endless streams of people visit the temples to burn incense and kowtow. Their gods are the Jade Emperor, Lord Guan and Goddess Wangmu. The operas are also performed for these gods. Through them, people pray for safety, for sons and happiness, and to drive away ills and disasters.

On the outdoor theatre in front of the temple, the elderly members of the audience are easily absorbed in the opera, while children and young people play around, looking for items sold at the stalls. Acrobats and storytellers also give shows here, amid the deafening beating of drums and gongs. Food stalls attract customers with various snacks like lamb noodles and other food prepared with buckwheat flour. There are always countless varieties of snacks on sale: the fried cake of happiness, mutton soup, dumplings and cakes from water-nuts, just to name a few. It is one of the reasons why all people, old or young, like temple fairs.



1. Local men offer sacrificial items in an ancient worship ceremony
2. The temple is full of offerings
3. Followers pray for the birth of sons or grandsons at a temple
4. Women in northern Shaanxi are beautiful, particularly the opera singers
5. Opera performances run late at night

SPRING COUPLETS

People engaged in different trades are busy with their job all year round. With the arrival of the Spring Festival, they hope to forget everything that has passed, whether successes or failures, and make a fresh start. So on their doorframes, both those facing the street and on individual houses in a big courtyard, and even the little doors of domestic animal sheds, they put up spring couplets on New Year's Eve. There are myriad variations of spring couplets in the form of square pieces of paper bearing such words as "fortune", "longevity", "wealth", "nobility" and "happiness", pasted up on walls or in the middle of doors. There are also "spring strips", each with four characters. One on an animal shed might say "prosperity for the manger", or "bumper harvest" on a granary, "be strong and sturdy" on a pigsty wall, "heavenly bestowed gushing spring" by a well, and "deep roots and thick foliage" on a tree trunk.

Even if someone dies shortly before the Spring Festival, spring couplets still have to be posted up. Their contents are not expressions of condolences or memorials, but good wishes. The difference, however, mostly lies in the colour of the paper in such cases. Bright red is no longer suitable. Instead, blue is used for the first year after someone's death, yellow on the second year and red only returns on the third year.

(by Ge He)

THE FIRST LUNAR MONTH IN

NORTHERN SHAANXI

DAY 8

Lucky Lights: Nine bowls filled with cooking oil lit up a three-metre-long counter made by joining several square tables together. Senior villagers believe each light represents a constellation and each person has a relevant light as his or her symbol. How the light burns indicates the person's fortune in the coming year.

After the daytime activities at Tanjiaping Village in Jiaxian County, the villagers lit their lucky lights in the evening. All the people circled the counter where the lights were put. I lost count of how many times we went around. The villagers kept adding oil to their lights, which brightened up the table. Like the others, I also added oil to the light representing my constellation, hoping it would bring me good luck. After lightening the lamps, the villagers held a sacrificial ceremony for their ancestors. They piled up yellow earth, burned incense and paper money to send messages to their dead ancestors. After tipping a cup of wine on the ground, a son said: "Father, I'm here to see you, bringing you the wine and cigarettes you enjoyed. Please take them." Then came a woman's voice: "Mother, we have brought the cakes you l'ked." The lights, the burning paper and the emotional words warmed the cold winter night.

DAY 15

The Lantern Festival:

The 15th day of the first lunar month is the traditional Chinese Lantern Festival. In all respects, it is an occasion of great importance. Lanterns are hung on the doors of every household and the sound of fireworks and the beating of drums and gongs are heard everywhere. In northern Shaanxi, each township and county organises *yangge* dance shows on the day. So in towns and county seats people go out to see the performances. In streets or lanes where the *yangge* teams will pass, they congregate to enjoy such folk culture as the *yangge* waist-drum and boating dances, folk songs and *suona* music. As the spectators are so numerous and everybody wants to get the best vantage point, very often someone might lose his shoes or cap in the crowd. To make sure their children get the best view, many parents hold their kids on their shoulders. It is an event no one should miss.

Circling the Fire Pagodas: In the evening, after eating "yuanxiao" (round dumplings made of glutinous rice flour and sweet stuffing), the villagers go out to see lanterns and fireworks. Circling the

fire pagodas and lighting the frames of fireworks are two major activities. Every household builds its own fire pagoda by piling up lumps of coal while the village builds a larger one at its entrance. A huge fire pagoda may need three or four trucks of coal to build and will burn for two days.

Sishilipu, a small town situated between Suide and Mizhi, is considered the home of northern Shaanxi culture by Chinese and foreign scholars. It is famous for its talented masons, paper-cut makers and *suona* players. The stringed barbecued mutton of Sishilipu is also believed to be the most delicious. Sishilipu's fire pagodas vary from household to household with some square, some round, and some in the shape of a person. On the Lantern Festival evening, people gather around their own fire pagodas to sing and dance. Those *suona* players who have been working in other places, return home to show off their skills. A small band with several *suonas* and a few percussion instruments can produce very touching music. An interesting local custom is that people hold their children over the fire pagoda, believing the fire will burn away all disease and ensure the children's health and safety in the year ahead.

Fireworks Frames: The most spectacular custom is lighting the fireworks frames. The villagers first select two 30-metre-long poles and build frames between them. They fix over 100 different varieties of fireworks on the wooden frames. Then they set up the huge frames on open ground in the village, pulling the contact fuses down to the ground. When the bright moon rises high in the sky, the village head gives the order and several men light the fuses at once. In a second, the fireworks fixed on the frames all explode in the air. Like a giant tree blooming in the sky, they put on a brilliant display.

Translated by Gloria Shang

1. Lighting the lanterns of good hope
2. Children also celebrate the Spring Festival (by Li Shengli)
3. The success of a good *yangge* dance largely depends on the skill of the umbrella holder and every team member is well-versed in the art
4. Lanterns are essential for celebrating Spring Festival
5. By circling the fire pagoda, the locals hope to be healthy in the year ahead

CELEBRATING THE GOD OF THE LAND

— IMMORTALS DESCEND TO BLESS THE WORLD

Photos & article by Huang Xinli

Accompanied by the firing of ancient guns, one after another statues of the gods descended from the sky. Thousands of villagers were waving flags and cheering in excitement. It was something I had never seen before — "Fang She" (as the locals call), a unique way of the villagers from Jiaxian County to Tanjiaping Village to celebrate the God of the Land by greeting the immortals.

CELEBRATING THE GOD OF THE LAND

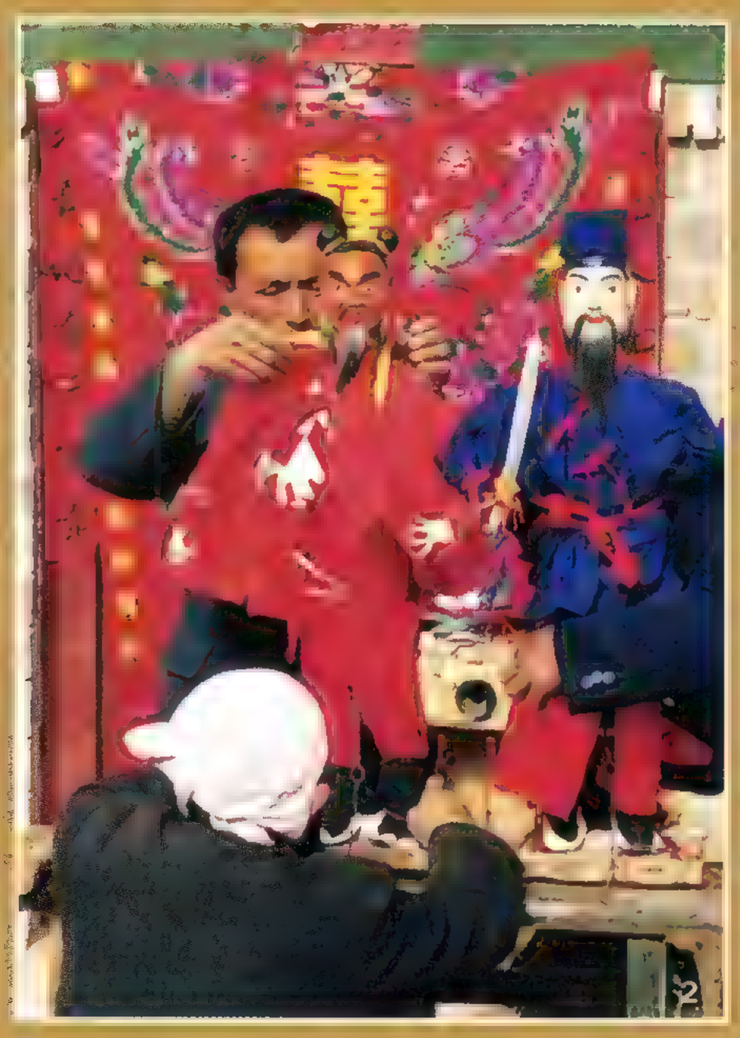
— IMMORTALS DESCEND TO BLESS THE WORLD

1

There are more than 300 households in Dingjing Village of the town of Gaoshan (Wine Cask) Hill. A Tudi Gong statue was erected in 1954 (year 43 of the Republic of China) in the front part of the village. Most villagers mostly believe in Catholicism. But the villagers at the back of the village believe in Taoism. They all live harmoniously in the same village. More together in the living. And in the dead, until their souls from the same well. A small Tudi Gong statue given by a Taoist believer is still in the village shrine. Everyday the God of Land and the statues of the immortals are held at every festivals.

Immortals Attend Festival Rites of Thanksgiving and Bless

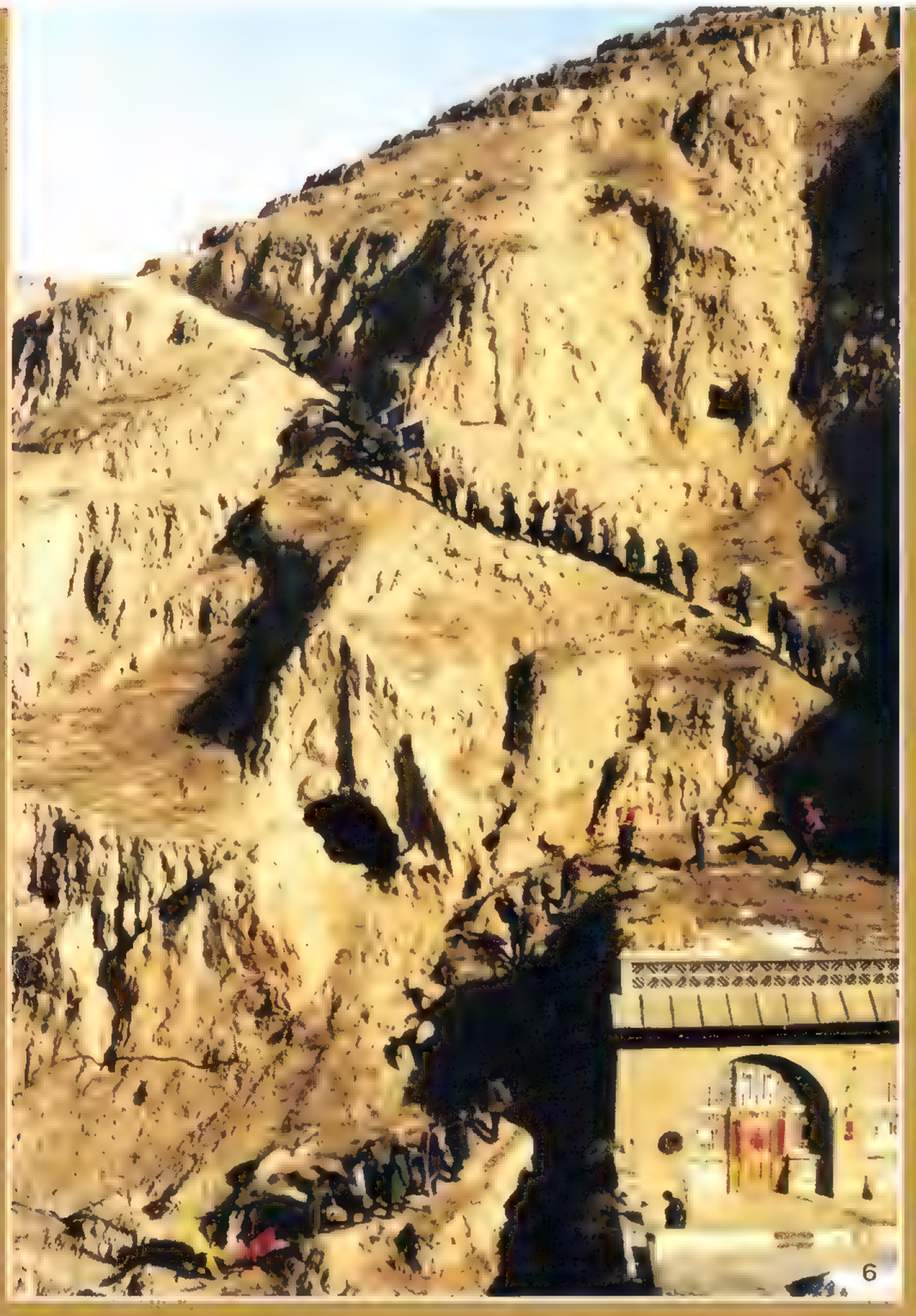
On the morning of the 8th lunar month this year, the small Tudi Gong temple suddenly became crowded with people coming and going and the whole Dingjing Village was in a festive mood. The villagers came to pay their respects to the Tudi Gong and to pray for blessings and peace for the whole year. They also came to see the statues of immortals and heroes. A Taoist ceremony was held. At any rate all believers in the village. They were invited out to the yard outside their own houses. Tables were laid out. Many villagers brought their own food and drinks to the yard. Outside the temple, there were stalls selling all kinds of goods. Many people came to see the statues of immortals and heroes. But most of them came just to watch. So it was the statues of immortals and heroes, a Taoist ceremony, that drew out. At any rate all believers in the village. They were invited out to the yard outside their own houses. Tables were laid out. Many villagers brought their own food and drinks to the yard. Outside the temple, there were stalls selling all kinds of goods. Many people came to see the statues of immortals and heroes. But most of them came just to watch. So it was the statues of immortals and heroes, a Taoist ceremony, that drew out. At any rate all believers in the village. They were invited out to the yard outside their own houses. Tables were laid out. Many villagers brought their own food and drinks to the yard. Outside the temple, there were stalls selling all kinds of goods. Many people came to see the statues of immortals and heroes. But most of them came just to watch. So it was the statues of immortals and heroes, a Taoist ceremony, that drew out. At any rate all believers in the village. They were invited out to the yard outside their own houses. Tables were laid out. Many villagers brought their own food and drinks to the yard. Outside the temple, there were stalls selling all kinds of goods. Many people came to see the statues of immortals and heroes. But most of them came just to watch. So it was the statues of immortals and heroes, a Taoist ceremony, that drew out. At any rate all believers in the village. They were invited out to the yard outside their own houses. Tables were laid out. Many villagers brought their own food and drinks to the yard. Outside the temple, there were stalls selling all kinds of goods. Many people came to see the statues of immortals and heroes. But most of them came just to watch. So it was the statues of immortals and heroes, a Taoist ceremony, that drew out.



2

Previous page: Villagers accompanied with their "gods" are waiting eagerly for the fire signaling the beginning of the celebration

1. Paper statues of immortals and animals are carried out one by one
2. Villagers busily and carefully decorate the statues two days before the celebration
3. Parading the villages with the statues
4. Newly decorated gods and colourful lanterns "taking a rest" at the corner of a cave dwelling
5. Gods come a long way to the hilltop. When worshiping them, people put on fresh wax to show their respect
6. A parade troupe circles a hill



CELEBRATING THE GOD OF THE LAND

— IMMORTALS DESCEND TO BLESS THE WORLD

Then following buglers and guards of honour shouldering blunderbusses, the villagers carrying coloured flags and "treasured umbrellas" began their annual march around the village and mountain. The one-kilometre-long parade moved to the deafening ring of cannons, drums and gongs, matched by loud percussion sounds from the villagers' yards. Crowds gathered on slopes to watch the fun, perching in the trees for a better view, and even the millstones were completely covered with people. Graceful or funny performances won constant cheers from the spectators, and the whole village saw the celebrations. After making the rounds of the village, the parade continued around the mountain, so as to despatch all evil spirits and illness to the north. As it wound around the mountain the sound of the gongs and drums echoed now and then, and it was not until dusk that the procession returned to the village, everyone covered all over with yellow dust.

Blessings from the Immortals

The village chairman calmly directed people at another site for more celebrations. Before he gave the order, a 10-cm thick ritual rope was carried out. Up to 2,000 metres long without a single knot, the rope signifies long and unbroken good luck to

landed. Some fell among the crowd; children were crying, and someone whose shoes were trodden off in the melee squeezed out to look for them. People kept pressing forward to touch the statues which they believe could bring good fortune. The old chairman got some grain, beans and pastries from a square dipper and distributed them to the crowd-this was to augur the harvest in the new year. People scrambled again to get the lucky gifts.

The immortals are honoured annually in the ceremony with the expectation they will bring happiness, longevity and safety to people as well as a festive spirit. They have satisfied the longing for good fortune that the villagers have nurtured in their hearts for thousands of years. No matter how the manners and morals of the day may change, these rustic traditions inherited from ancient times will not vanish from the land.

Translated by Yu Ling

1. Before they are "landed", the paper figures are carefully received by ceremonial officers
2. The recitals of Taoist masters go together with the gods
3. At the end of the long rope are people who have come to welcome the gods
4. A baby is brought by his mother to receive the gods' blessings
5. The space at the foot of the hill is packed with spectators

BLOODY FESTIVITIES
– FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE FOR GOOD LUCK

Photos by Chan Yat Nin, Li Shengli, Hu Wugong Article by Shi Baoxiu

1

In this boundless universe of ours there is a great variety of unique skills and strange customs. The Lantern Festival in Shaanxi is a happy occasion yet a team of people showed up looking as though they had all been fatally stabbed with sharp weapons.

It is not a celebration of Halloween, nor a time to mourn the souls of the dead, so why should such a terrible and cruel sight appear at an auspicious festival? According to the local people, this is to conquer terror with terror and combat evil with evil. This is the unique "bloody festival" peculiar to Shaanxi, and it is held in two places: in Baoji County in the west where it is called "bloody story" and in Heyang County in the east where it is known as "bloody work".

Family Keeps Secret of Bloody Story's Make-up

The unique "bloody story" occurs only at Sansi Village, Chisha Township in Baoji County. According to the villagers, at the end of the Qing Dynasty in the early 20th century, a mediator wandering from Henan Province to Sansi Village slept in Longshan Yan's home. A village named him Hong and took good care of him until he recovered. Very grateful for the villager's kindness, the Mediator passed himself helping him and introduced a dozen weapons. After that, the "bloody story" – a set of weapons and the makeup secrets owned by all of Sansi Village and have been passed down by six generations already within the family through only one son.

Village theatrical performances staged during festivals usually have a long list of plays and ways for stopping us to draw on. However the "bloody story" has only one play. For over a century only "Lian s Tower" has been staged which tells the story from the classical Chinese novel Outlaws of the Marsh. The story continues can be endless in following.

The make-up secrets for the "bloody story" have been handed down through sons only, excluding daughters, sons-in-law and anyone outside the family. When performers go on the make up, the door is closed tightly and even villagers peeping in fail a trace of the skills are revealed. A loyal and dumb servant is asked to guard the door so no one can intrude.

In November 2000 a group of German tourists came to watch village theatrical performances in Baoji. When the "bloody story" was performed they were astounded. Right after the show they invited the performers with their troupe over to give a show in Germany in the following March. But the old master-in-charge refused due to

"Bloody Work"-Real Intestines Exposed

Equally as unique as "bloody story" is "bloody work," which is staged at Baodai Village, Mengzhuang Township, in Heyang County, Shaanxi Province. The costumes and make up are similar to those at Sansi Village in Baoji. The differences, however, lie in the themes and weapons featured in the show. In "bloody work," normal weapons and official instruments of torture are mostly used. While in "bloody story" the weapons are almost all household utensils, farm tools, and even wnatever comes to hand like bricks or tiles.

As with "bloody story," the making-up for "bloody work" is top secret. However the intestines coming out of a performer's body are real enough not from a human being. In Baodai village every year before the Spring Festival, the head of the village asks any family that is going to kill a pig to keep a few segments of intestines in the right manner. When the 15th day of the first month of the lunar year falls, the intestines are taken out and cultured with "blood" to make them look real.

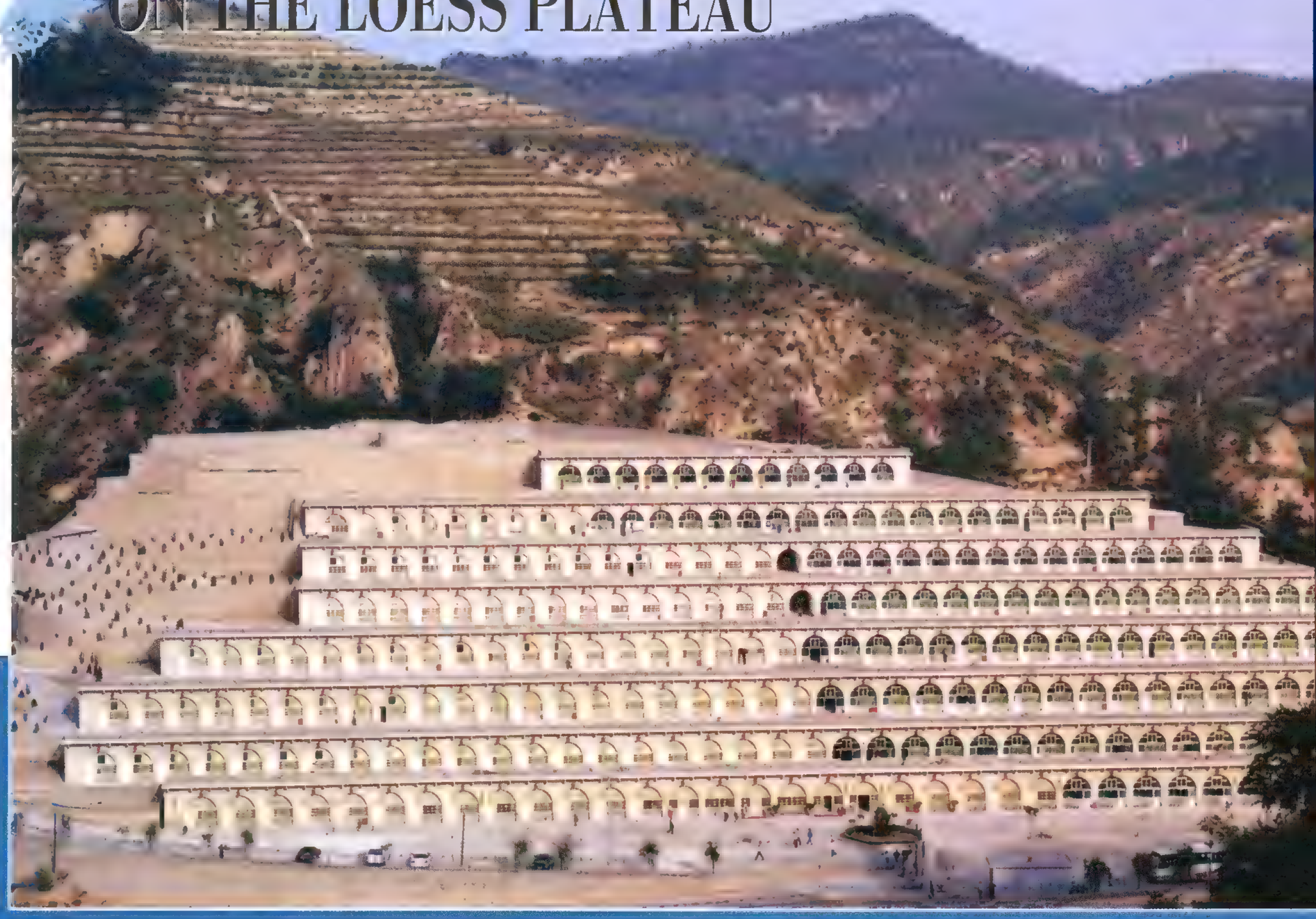
2

1. A man with his head "stabbed" with a pair of scissors (by Li Shengli)
2. Sheep and pig intestines are used as props (by Hu Wugong)
3. The "bloody" folk art show attracts tourists (by Chan Yat Nin)
4. 5. Locals with their heads "stuck by sharp knives" parade in the village (by Chan Yat Nin)
6. Farm tools or knife are common props used in the bloody folk art show of Chisha Township (by Li Shengli)

GREETING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR ON THE LOESS PLATEAU

LIVING IN A CAVE HOTEL ON THE LOESS PLATEAU

Photos by Shi Baoxiu
Article by Hu Jun

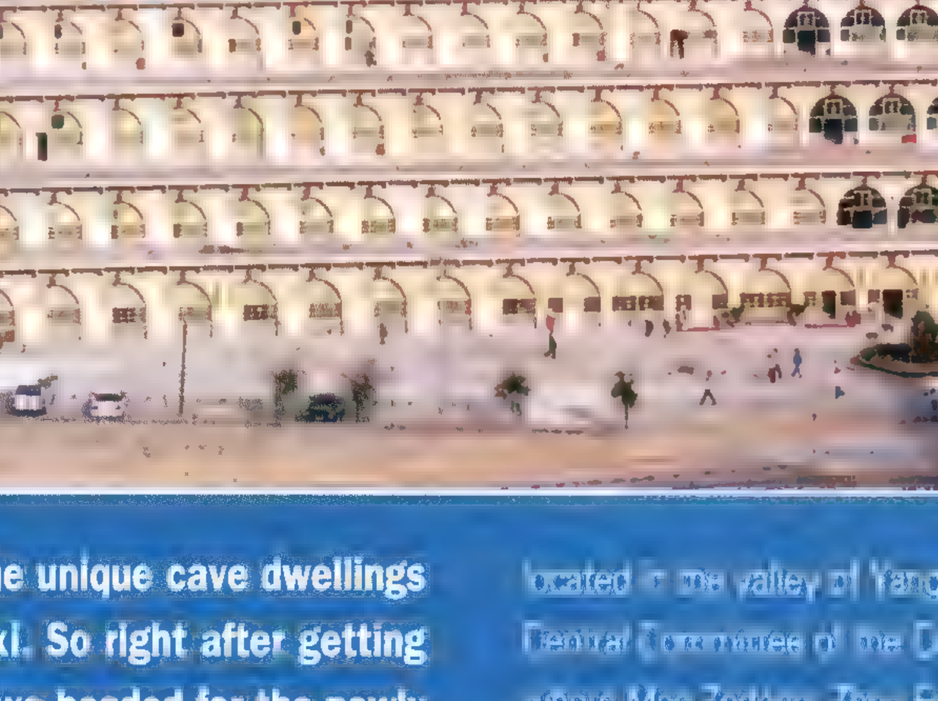


It is wonderful to experience the unique cave dwellings when travelling in northern Shaanxi. So right after getting off the train from Xi'an to Yan'an, we headed for the newly opened cave hotel to experience its special features peculiar to the loess area.

The Yangjiaung cave hotel covers almost a complete hillside, with eight rows standing on top of each other, forming a magnificent mass of 268 cave dwellings altogether. The red lanterns hanging at each cave-dwelling gate lit up the whole hillside

Most Typical Housing on the Loess Plateau

The Yangjiaung Cave Hotel is located in the valley of Yangjiaung, Yan'an City — once the site of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. This is the place where Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and other Chinese leaders worked and where the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Forum on Literature and Art in Yan'an were held. The famous "Yellow River Cantata" composed by Xian Xinghai was first performed here over half a century ago.



Cave dwellings are typical residences on the Loess Plateau in northern China. There are three kinds of them in Yan'an: earthen, brick and stone cave dwellings. The reason for their popularity is that they are the most economical housing here, and choose a dry spot where the earth is of good quality, faces the

south and is sheltered from the wind. After digging into the hill for one or two metres, expand the digging in four directions until it is finally big enough with an arched ceiling. After the excavations are dried out by the wind and fitted with a door and windows, the new residence is complete. Stone cave dwellings, with walls and vault built from stone slabs to make them both firm and beautiful, are the most luxurious among the three types, and the hotel is of this stone construction.

Economical as cave dwellings are, they have many other advantages: strong, durable, warm in winter and cool in summer, with big doors and windows which are usually built and decorated with artistic ornaments. The window lattices incorporate various kinds of flower patterns, some in the shape of a lotus bloom and some like an open fan. Bright and practical, the windows are covered with papercuts, each different from the other. In early winter, the evidence of the autumn harvest can still be seen everywhere: long strings of hot peppers and clusters of corn cobs hanging by the door, beans, and big golden pumpkins on the windowsills, all adding to an auspicious and warm atmosphere.

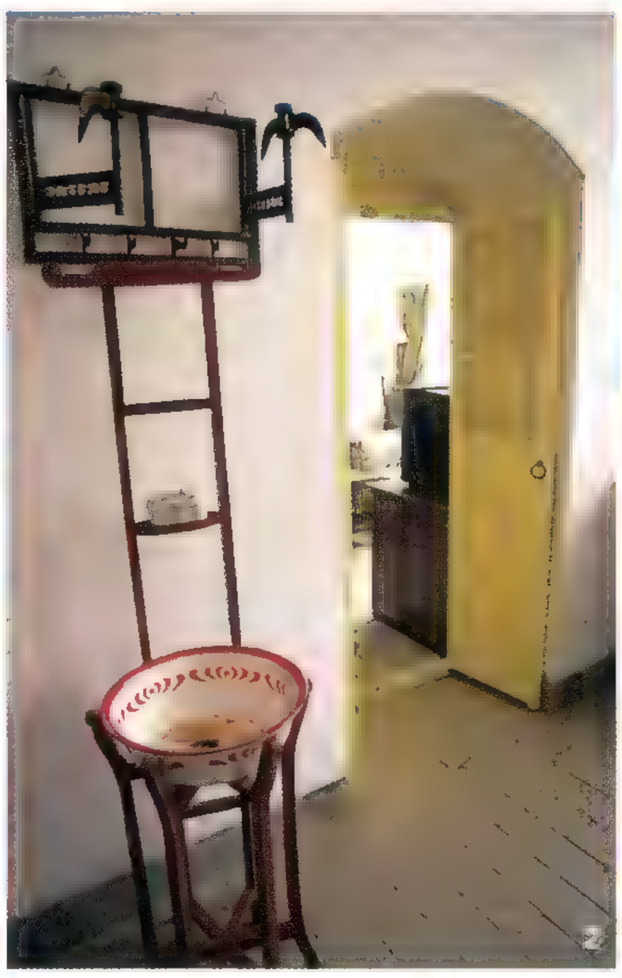
A Taste of Cave Life

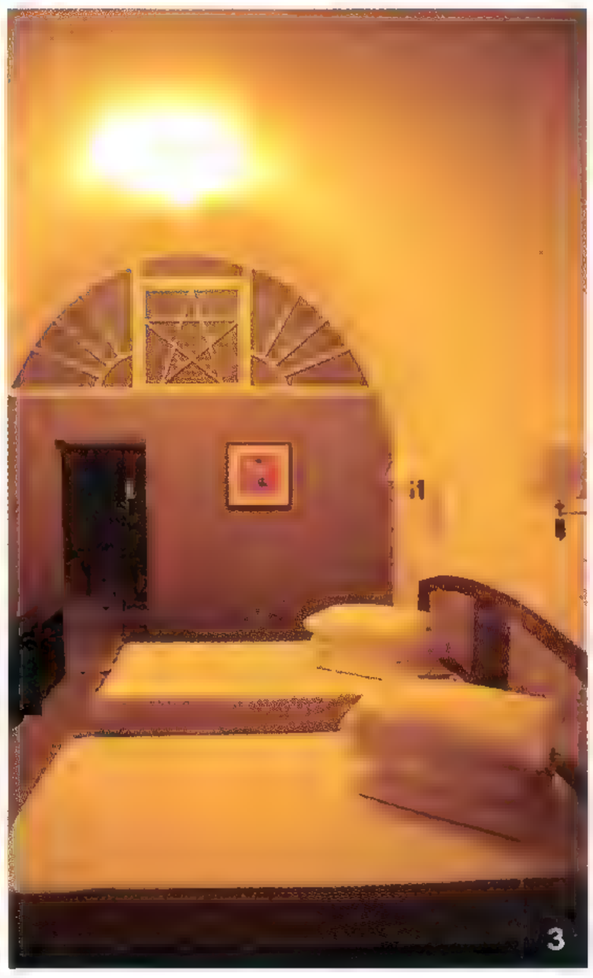
There are many kinds of rooms in the hotel. The suite called "Yan'anese" features traditional Yan'an style furniture, with a big heated "kang" (brick bed) on which the bedding is all made of handspun cloth, and the floor is paved with earthen bricks. When you enter the room you are instantly aware of the fragrance of the earth. The deep red colour of the furniture fills the whole room with warmth and joy. Looking at the exquisite papercuts on the window and wearing the newly made Yan'an style clothes while you sit on the warm "kang" drinking a cup of loca wine, you feel as if you were really in a farmer's home.

In the hotel, you notice everywhere the strong northern Shaanx customs and features. The "kang" of northern Shaanxi has some heating channels underneath and there is also a heater in the toilet. So as I sat cross-legged on the heated kang, covered by a thick snow-white quilt, the warmth in the room soon made me doze off. When I woke up it was already nine in the morning. I took a walk along the

1. The 268 cave dwellings built on the mountain slope create a striking view (by Zhang Aisheng)
2. The Yangjialing Cave Dwelling Hotel was built at the former site of the Communist Party Central Office, where the "Yellow River Chorus" was once performed
3. The cave dwelling hotel appears even magnificent at night

LIVING IN A CAVE HOTEL ON THE LOESS PLATEAU





1. A typical Yan'an farmers' breakfast at 10 yuan each person
2, 3. Standard rooms in the cave dwelling hotel
4. Located in Wanhua Village, China's largest cave dwelling has been altered as a folk culture museum
5. Cave dwellings with simple design in Wanhua Village
6. Steamed buns of millet flour — a typical local food in Yan'an
7. Pork with Chinese cabbage — a farmer's dish in Yan'an
8. Mutton with carrot — a delicacy in Yan'an

long courtyard and saw a stretch of 30 to 40 stone cave dwellings in a line. Curious, I looked in the windows and saw the caves have different designs and furnishings. Some have a double sofa bed, while others have a big "kang". There are double-room suites as well as suites of three rooms with davenport, desk, tea table, and parlour meant for administration or business trips.

The "bridal chamber" suite designed for newlyweds is my favourite. There is a big "kang", an old-styled "kang" table and furnishings of a farmer's house such as a bronze oil lamp, an old wine pot, a wooden frame for hanging clothes and hats, a basket for needlework — all sourced directly from farmers' houses. Everything in the suite is full of the pure local flavour and special style of the Loess Plateau. In the evening, tourists can also enjoy a typical northern Shaanxi-style performance.

Translated by Yu Lang

Travel Tips:

Transportation: Yangjialing Cave Dwelling Hotel can be reached easily as it is only about 6km from the downtown area of Yan'an. There is a special minibus from the railway station to the hotel and taxi is available all the time.

Accommodation: There are standard rooms with king-size bed, suites, honeymoon suites, bridal chamber suites, economical suites, etc. A standard room is about 200 yuan a day.

Food: There is a dining hall with accommodation for about 300 people at the same time. The hotel provides Shaanxi-flavour dishes, special snacks and traditional styled food.

Entertainment: There is a multi-purpose hall with a capacity for 800 people and an exhibition hall of folk culture. Folk artists are ready to provide you with wonderful performances of yangko dance, waist-drum beating, and Shaanxi folk songs. You also can enjoy the splendid folk culture of Yan'an area right in the hotel.

Farmers' Courtyards at Wanhua Village – In the Home Village of Hua Mulan

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Hu Jun

Wanhua (Ten-thousand Flowers) Village is a newly developed tourist destination with its special attraction of farmers' courtyards. Located 10 km from Yan'an, the village used to be called Wanhua Valley, the hometown of Hua Mulan, a well-known Chinese woman general disguised herself as a man to fight in the army for her father about 1,500 years ago. The Yan'an area is mostly a vast stretch of yellow earth with little vegetations as it is located on the loess plateau. But Wanhuagou is an exception. Its valleys are covered with lush grass and trees, and flowers bloom everywhere, reminding people of the scenery south of the Yangtse River.

A grand majestic stone cave structure greeted us as we entered a manor. This is the largest stone cave dwelling in northern Shaanxi—the Exhibition Hall of Northern Shaanxi Folk Culture, where we saw the best works of northern Shaanxi folk art. After the exhibition, it was especially interesting to visit the villagers' cave dwellings and take some pictures. There are 13 different styles of farmers' courtyards here,which reflect the folk custom of 13 counties in Yan'an area ,such as the patchworks of Yanchuan, woolen embroidery of Luochuan, and papercuts of Ansai, etc. Formerly farmer's cave dwellings, these courtyards have now become hostels managed by their originals residents. It is especially enjoyable to live in a farmer's cave dwelling and taste the farmer's homely food. Such authentic food is hard to find in any other places, so fresh and tasty, right from the mountain village

cooked by the hostess in the most common homely way. Living in the village costs very little-30 to 50 yuan a day including meals. That's why the village is often brimming with tourists who came in swarms in spring, summer and autumn. Even people in other part of Yan'an area would come with their families to relax here for the weekend.

Travel Tips:

Transportation: Take a bus or minibus from Yan'an City which goes directly to Wanhuashan Scenic Area in 20 minutes.

Accommodation: Wanhua Hotel (3-star), standard room is 200 to 500 yuan a day according to the seasons. Farmers' cave-dwelling hostels and farmhouses are available (50 yuan a day/ person, including meals).

Food: Dishes of Sichuan, Hunan, Shaanxi and Guangdong flavours are served in the hotel. Authentic northern Shaanxi food and snacks are provided at farmers' hostels and courtyards.

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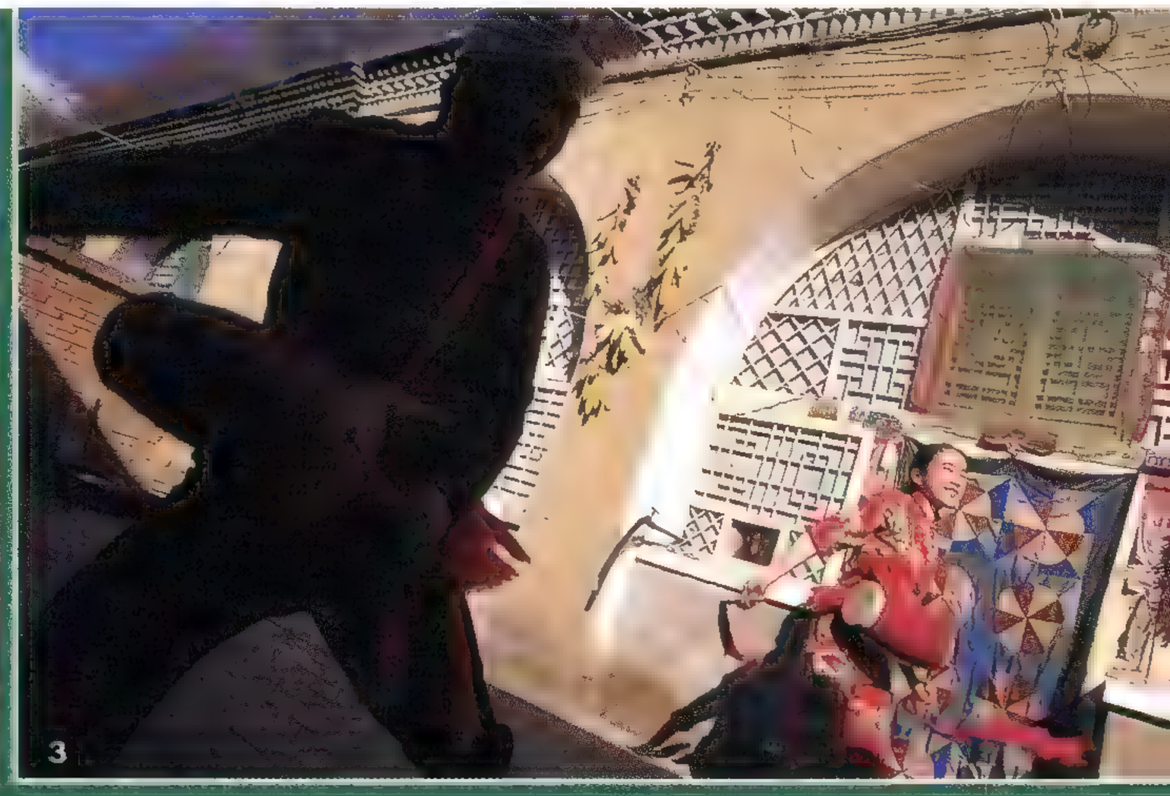
WATCHING WAIST-DRUM DANCING IN ANSAI

Photos by Shi Baoxiu, Wang Pei, & others
Article by Hu Jun

Waist-drum dancing in Ansai goes back at least 2,000 years. Waist drums were invented on the battlefields of northern Shaanxi where the people from the Central Plain fought with the northern nomadic tribes in the past. During times of war, the drums were sounded as warnings and encouragement to soldiers, and in peacetime they were a source of entertainment. Brick carvings from the Song Dynasty unearthed in Ansai show waist-drum dancing. Ansai people perform the dance to usher in the New Year and pray for peace and good luck. They also dance to celebrate good harvests, expressing their joy at another productive season.



Chen Peiliang's house stands on a hillside very near the county seat of Ansai. The 46-year-old Chen is now a well-established waist-drum performer in the country. A waist- drummer since the 1970s, he performed at the opening ceremony of the Asian Games in 1988 and again at the opening ceremony of the 1990 Asian Games, serving as leading performer of the 1,000-strong waist-drum dancing team. He and his teammates brought the Ansai-style waist drum to its greatest heights. At the ceremony marking the return of Hong Kong in 1997, Chen once again led the waist-drum team. He has been invited far and wide in recent years, leaving him little time at home. In January 2001, he even went to Myanmar to teach waist-drum dancing and spent the Spring Festival there.

How did Chen Peiliang rise to the top of so many waist-drum performers?

"Playing the drum does not simply mean using your hands to beat the drum with the little sticks, you have to engage your heart and mind. To play the drum well, you have to put in sheer strength, have drive and be daring, use clever techniques and inject bursts of force and vigour, in order to bring out a magic beauty. Ansai waist drumming can be in soft or hard style. For the soft style, the performer

1. Apart from waist-drums from Ansai, less known to outsiders are chest drums from Luochuan (by Wang Pei)
2. Getting ready to a waist-drum performance (by Zhang Aisheng)
3. Chen Peiliang teaches his daughter waist-drum dance (by Shi Baoxiu)
4, 5. Ansai waist-drum consists of the soft and hard styles. The hard style features a lot of hard beating, kicking, side-jumping, and stamping (by Huang Xinli)

GREETING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR ON THE LOESS PLATEAU

WATCHING WAIST-DRUM DANCING IN ANSAI

Chen Peiliang with his wife and daughter (by Shi Baoxiu)

emphasises twisting of the body, using waist and shoulders to create lively and graceful movements. The hard style features a lot of hard beating, kicking, side-jumping, and stamping. When people perform in this style on barren, dry and dusty ground during windy weather, they kick up the dust as they dance to create an image of performing in the clouds."

Chen told me that people in Ansai don't just perform the dance for celebrations, they also dance when they are in extreme pain and difficulty. So sometimes people simply bring out their drums and indulge in a bout of dancing in the courtyard, kicking up dust until they are sweating all over. When they become physically exhausted, their spirits rise and they stop worrying about their problems.

Translated by Huang Youyii

Waist-drum Performance — an All Season Event

In northern Shaanxi places such as Hengshan and Mizhi counties in the Yulin area, you can enjoy waist-drum performances almost everywhere. The Ansai style, however, is unique. With the development of tourism in recent years, the performance is no longer solely kept for festivals but has become a program that can be performed any time. This means no matter when you go to Ansai, you will be able to enjoy the great entertainment of waist-drum dancing.

However, you have to make reservations. As the performers are all farmers living near the county seat, they usually are busy with their work at home, and it is hard to bring them together at short notice.

The number of performers required determines the time needed for reservation. For example, you need only one or two days notice in advance to see a performance of 20 people. If you want a large team of 100 to 200 people, you will have to make the reservation 10 days or even two weeks in advance. To bring together such a large team, people from several or more than a dozen villages have to be called up. Many farmers still do not have a telephone connection and have to be informed in person.

The charge for a performance varies with the season. During the slack agricultural season, the charge for each performer is 50 yuan per 30 to 40 minutes. During the busy season, the price goes up by about 10 to 20 yuan. And this is the price quoted for a performance on flat ground near the county seat. If dancers are asked to go up hillsides to create a dusty effect, the charge is 80 yuan per person. Of course, you can hire a bus and take them to more ideal sites.

Tips for the Traveller:

Transport: The expressway between Yan'an and Ansai is about 40 km, making road travel very easy.

Contact: Ansai County Cultural and Cultural Relic Museum (Mr. Xu and Mr. Sun)

Contact phone: 911-6212669/ 1399-177-5908

Reference price: For a 30-minute performance on flat ground by a team of 20 people, the payment is 1,000 yuan.

Footnote: Ansai is known for three unique cultural items: waist drums, paper-cuts and farmers' paintings, which are on display and for sale at the county's cultural museum. If you visit farmers' home, you will find many surprise

Transportation:

To go to northern Shaanxi, you'd better get into Xi'an first. There are flights going to Xi'an from Hong Kong, Shenzhen , Guangzhou and other cities. The distance between Xi'an and northern Shaanxi is about 500 to 600 km, there are flights, trains and buses to and fro. Alternatively, you can also go from Yinchuan in Ningxia, Qingyang in Gansu, Shijiazhuang in Hebei, Beijing, Taiyuan and Jiexiu in Shanxi by taking the inter-province buses.

Accommodation:

Normally county seats are served with hotels and hostels of fairly good conditions. The rate is relatively lower during the Spring Festival time. For a mere 20 yuan, I stayed in a luxurious suite in Jingbian County. Conditions of lodging in towns are less good. Even when there are no small hostels, the hospitable northern Shaanxi people will not allow the guests feel uncomfortable. The rate for a small hostel is 5 to 10 yuan per night.

Itinerary for Spending the Spring Festival in Northern Shaanxi (from the 28th of the last lunar month to the 15th day of the 1st lunar new year month)

Dagger dance performing troupe [illegible] (by Huang Xinli)

28th Day of the Last Lunar Month

Xi'an → Yan'an: There are bus services to Yan'an from Qindu Depot in eastern suburban Xi'an, the Yan'an Office Building, Yulin Office Building and Xian Railway Station. An Iveco express bus pulls out every hour at the rate of 52 yuan.
Train: Both in the morning and evening, 32 yuan for a hard seat
Plane: At 9:00 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 580 yuan.

29th Day

Visit Yan'an Baotashan (Pagoda Hill), Yangjialing, Fenghuangshan (Phoenix Hill), and Zaoyuan Garden to get an initial feel of the special Spring Festival atmosphere of northern Shaanxi.

New Year's Eve

Yan'an → Ansai: You will notice that farmers' houses along the way decorated with paper-cuts on windows, spring couplets on the doors, people visit the graves to honour the memory of their family members who have passed away, or sending couplets to temples, or busily preparing the New Year's Eve meal and children in brand new clothes. In the evening, you will have a chance to sit down on a heated brick bed of farmers to have the New Year's Eve dinner with farmers, during which drinking of warm millet wine is accompanied with singing folk songs till early morning when

people begin to set off firecrackers.

2nd Day of the 1st Lunar Month

People stay at home on the 1st day or the Spring Festival day but go and visit their relatives on the 2nd day.

Yan'an °~ Mizhi: Transportation was difficult in the past, so that when people went to visit each other, they totally depended on walking or riding donkeys which are rarely seen these days. Occasionally donkeys as transportation means can still be seen in some mountainous villages in Wuqi, Hengshan and Jiaxian counties, where small kids are put into a basket and gifts for relatives are in another basket straddling across the donkey's back.

3rd Day

Villages are hustle and bustle with folk art shows. It is said that people in Ansai learned to play waist drums from those in Hengshan where they have a strange style of waist drum dance. At Hengshan, performers carry a mirror to expose ghosts on the head, and are tied in the waist with a drum with the help of a colorful quilt cover. The ancient *yangge* dance song in the Greater and Lesser Jihan villages in Yulin County, the strange waist-drum dance in Hengshan, the particular style of Ansai waist-drum, the dance to imitate boat rowing in Mizhi and Qingjian are the most typical local folk art activities.

4th and 5th Days

Watching local operas: From the 1st to the 9th lunar month is the busy season for opera troupes. From the 4th or 5th day of the 1st month onward, folk art show and opera singing are the tradition of the region. In Mizhi and Suide counties, all villages hired opera troupes to come and perform. In the area near the Yellow River, Jin (ancient name for Shanxi Province) Opera is the tune while the area west of the Wuding River is the homeland of Qin (ancient name for Shaanxi Province) Opera. On a piece of open ground, people build a makeshift stage and they begin to stage the operas. In Mizhi and Suide, you just ask any person to find out which village is hosting an opera on the day.

6th Day

Mizhi °~ Jiaxian: Visit the unique natural scenery of the Yellow River at the Xianglu (Incense Burner) Temple, Baiyunshan, a sacred home of Taoism, and take a walk along the Yellow River on whose water chunks of ice are afloat, in order to feel the majesty of the Yellow River between the Shaanxi-Shanxi Valley.

7th Day

Take a minibus in Jiaxin to Tanjiaping for 2 yuan to watch a folk art show. You will see fairies and immortals made of paper and other materials descending from the sky, bringing happiness and good luck to the people. The show is the only one of its kind in China.

8th Day

To see the activities of walking through nine turns at bank of Yellow River at Tanjiaping.

9th and 10th Days

Tour of ancient towns. Jiaxian, known as Xiazhou in ancient time, is full of ancient towns including Xinzhen, Kangzhen and Dianzhen towns in the south, Wuzhen in the middle and Tongzhen in the north, where, a large number of Ming and Qing dynasties' structures are still well preserved today. To take a tour along the lanes in these ancient towns and tasting the local horseshoe cake and preserved red dates give you a special joy. Further southward, you will arrive in Wubao and Chuankou, where Mao Zedong once crossed the Yellow River in a wooden boat particular to the region to arrive in the neighbouring Shanxi Province during the Civil War (1946 — 49). Once in Shanxi, go along the river south and you will come to Zekou, once a north China commodity distribution centre. This ancient looking town is dominated by meticulously built houses of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The grand theatre at the Black Dragon Temple is by far the best-preserved old theatre I have ever come across. It takes simply a little over two hours to go from Zekou to Wubao County back in Shaanxi Province. The well-preserved ancient Wubao town is another great tourist attraction under provincial protection. The Confucius Temple and Niangniangmiao (Temple of Goddess) of the Song Dynasty are usual tourist destinations. The wall surrounding the town is as solid as it was first built.

11th and 12th Days

Wubao °~ Suide °~ Qingjian: Suide is famous for its suona (a local form of an extremely high-pitched trumpet like musical instrument) artists and stone masons. The suona artists from Zaolinping, Yihe Town and Sishilipu are known far and wide. Just ask anyone to play it and you will find the tune mesmerizing and unforgettable. Masons are even in greater numbers. Stretching for more than 30 km from the county seat to Sishilipu, several hundred masonry shops line up the road. The Thousand-lion Bridge in the northeast of the county seat display exactly a thousand lions sculpted to be in different shapes, which are a demonstration of the art of the local masons. In Qingjian County, people in all the some 600 villages can sing the local tune of "Daoqing".

13th Day

Go from Qingjian to Yuhe Town in Yuling County to attend the local art fair where more than 20 yangge dance troupes compete with each other from morning to the evening.

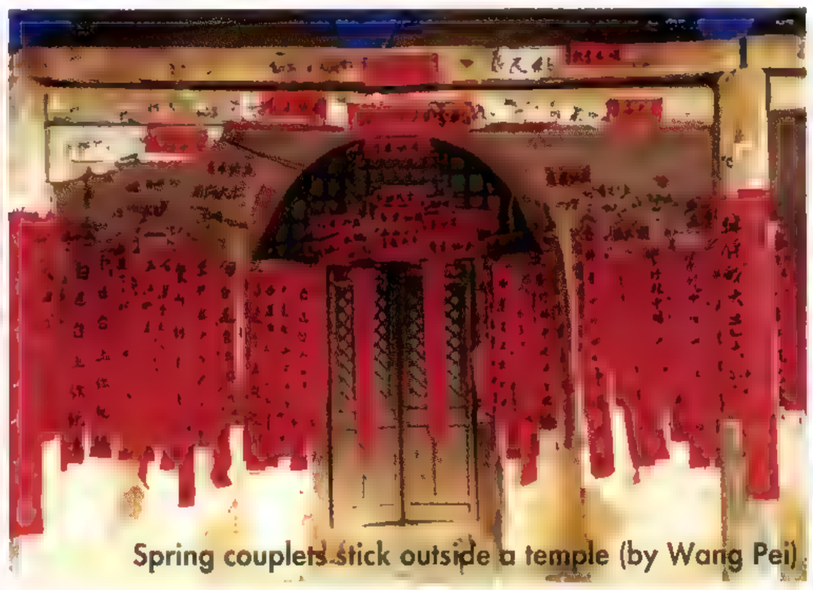
14th Day

In Yulin, you must visit the Zhenbai Fortress on the Great Wall and the Red Stone Valley, and taste the local delicacies of bean curd and "stewed fresh three delights".

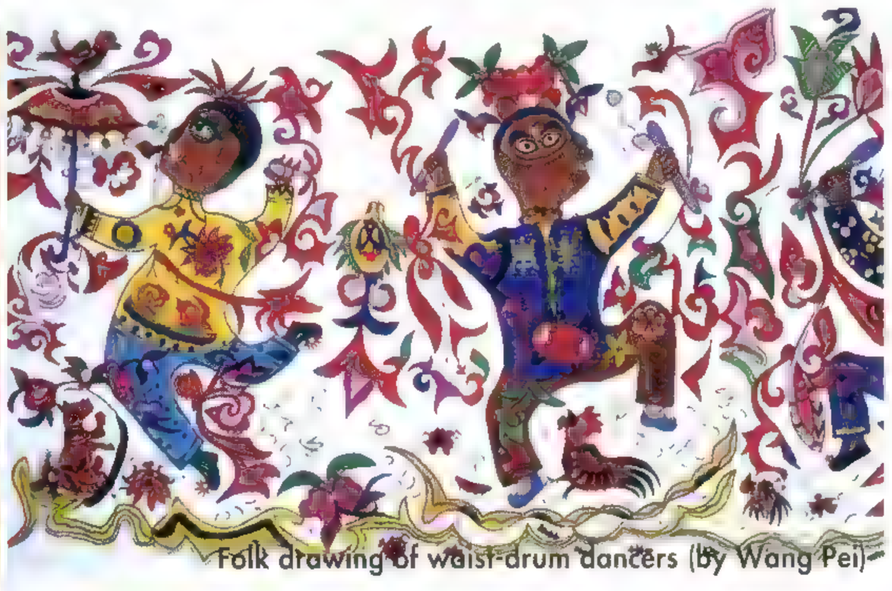
15th Day

In Northern Shaanxi, the Red Lantern Festival (always on the 15th day of the 1st lunar month) sees the most solemn and lively holiday activities including *yangge* dance competitions, lantern shows, firework displays, etc. which together bring the Spring Festival celebration to its climax. Yulin, Mizhi and Fugu are all ideal destinations to spend the Lantern Festival.

Hurrying to visit faraway relatives (Huang Xinli)



Spring couplets stick outside a temple (by Wang Pei)



Folk drawing of waist-drum dancers (by Wang Pei)

CITY SNAPS

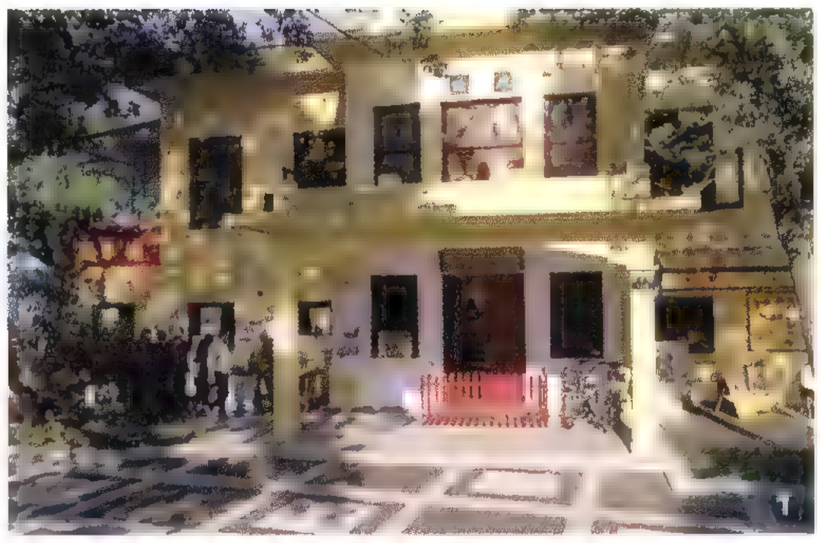
Everchanging Hangzhou

1

2

Over the years Hangzhou has welcomed numerous visitors from home and abroad, many of whom never forgot this beautiful city. During the past millennium, changes have taken place in Hangzhou though the air over the West Lake is still heavy with the sweet scent of osmanthus. The Chenglu Villa where Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mei Ling stayed on their honeymoon is open to the public again; the collapsed Leifeng Pagoda by the Yingbo Bridge has been rebuilt; and the new generation of Hangzhou people wavers between traditional teahouses and the Starbucks Coffee Shop introduced from the West... Hangzhou today is totally different from how we remember it.

1. Tourists climb to the lookout terrace of a pagoda at the top of Mt. Ziyang to view the Qiantang River to the east and West Lake to the west
2. Savouring the leisurely life of Hangzhou people with a cup of tea by the lake



【Chenglu Villa Where Chiang Kai-shek Honeymooned】

This exquisitely constructed three-storey building stands by a pleasure-boat wharf in a park by the West Lake. Two Chinese characters "澄廬"(Chenglu Villa) are inscribed on the lintel of the door of the southern balcony on the second floor. A wooden board hanging by the villa gate reads "Not Open to Visitors". The large villa is quiet, only lush foliage rustling gently in the wind. Curious visitors often inquire of local people going for a walk with their birdcages: "Who owns the villa?" But even the locals cannot give a definite answer. Two years ago, Chenglu Villa was listed as a historical monument under Hangzhou City protection. Originally it was owned by Sheng Enyi, president of the Hanyeping Company, China's first iron and steel complex. After their wedding ceremony in Shanghai in December 1927, Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mei Ling came to Chenglu Villa to enjoy their honeymoon. Following the Xi'an Incident, Chiang Kai-shek, who had not yet recovered from the shock, came to recuperate at Chenglu Villa. Here he secretly met Zhou Enlai and Pan Hannian, representatives of the

Communist Party of China. Today the villa is merely an activity centre for retired Hangzhou government officials.

【New Statue Beside Yongjin Gate】

Yongjin Gate, very close to Chenglu Villa, used to be Hangzhou's western gate. In the past, visitors boarded a boat here for a tour of the West Lake. Later the city walls were demolished and a park created. Recently the roads along the southern bank of the West Lake were joined up, and a statue of Zhang Shun set up near the Yongjin Pond. Zhang Shun, known as White Fish in the Waves, is one of the 108 heroes of the classic novel *Outlaws of the Marsh*. Originally Zhang Shun, a strong swimmer, went fishing on the Xunyang River. Later he went to Liangshan Hill to join the rebels, and served meritoriously in the military. Finally he followed Song Jiang on a punitive expedition against Fang La, and laid down his life at the Yongjin Watergate.

【Resurrecting Leifeng Pagoda】

Leifeng Pagoda was rebuilt not long ago, attracting media attention. For the old people in Hangzhou the pagoda symbolises the romantic story of Bai Suzhen and Xu Xian.

There are many folk stories about the West Lake, the most famous being the Legend of the White Snake. A white snake that had practised asceticism for 1,000 years turned into a beautiful woman named Bai Suzhen. She met Xu Xian, the younger owner of a drug store in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. They fell in love with each other and were soon married. However, they were persecuted by Fa Hai, a rascally monk. Though all Bai Suzhen wanted was to be an ordinary human being, she was finally buried under the Leifeng Pagoda.

According to historical records, the construction of the pagoda started in 972 (the fifth year of the Song Emperor Kaibao's reign) to preserve Sakyamuni's hair and scriptures. On the afternoon of September 25, 1924 the pagoda suddenly collapsed because many of its bricks had been stolen.

"Sunset at Leifeng Pagoda" is one of the 10 best-known views of the West Lake. Without the pagoda, the lake would be incomplete. Its reconstruction started at the end of 2000. After nearly two years work, a copper pagoda with an imitation wooden

1. The place where Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mei Ling spent their honeymoon, Chenglu Villa is now an activity centre for retired government officials
2. The Baidi Causeway was built to commemorate Tang-dynasty poet Bai Juyi who renovated it during his time of office in Hangzhou
3. Visitors can take a convenient escalator to the rebuilt Leifeng Pagoda
4. In October 2002, the West Lake southern tourist route opened, attracting lots of tourists

structure was finished. I walked into the pagoda and discovered it stands on the old foundations that are surrounded by glass. Two years ago archaeologists excavated bronze mirrors, silver boxes, silk, a gilded silver pagoda and other precious cultural relics from the underground palace, and these are now preserved in the Zhejiang Museum. From the top of the pagoda visitors have a panoramic view of the beautiful West Lake, with its long causeways, bridges, weeping willows, pleasure boats plying back and forth, green trees by the water, and pavilions, towers and terraces scattered among the hills.

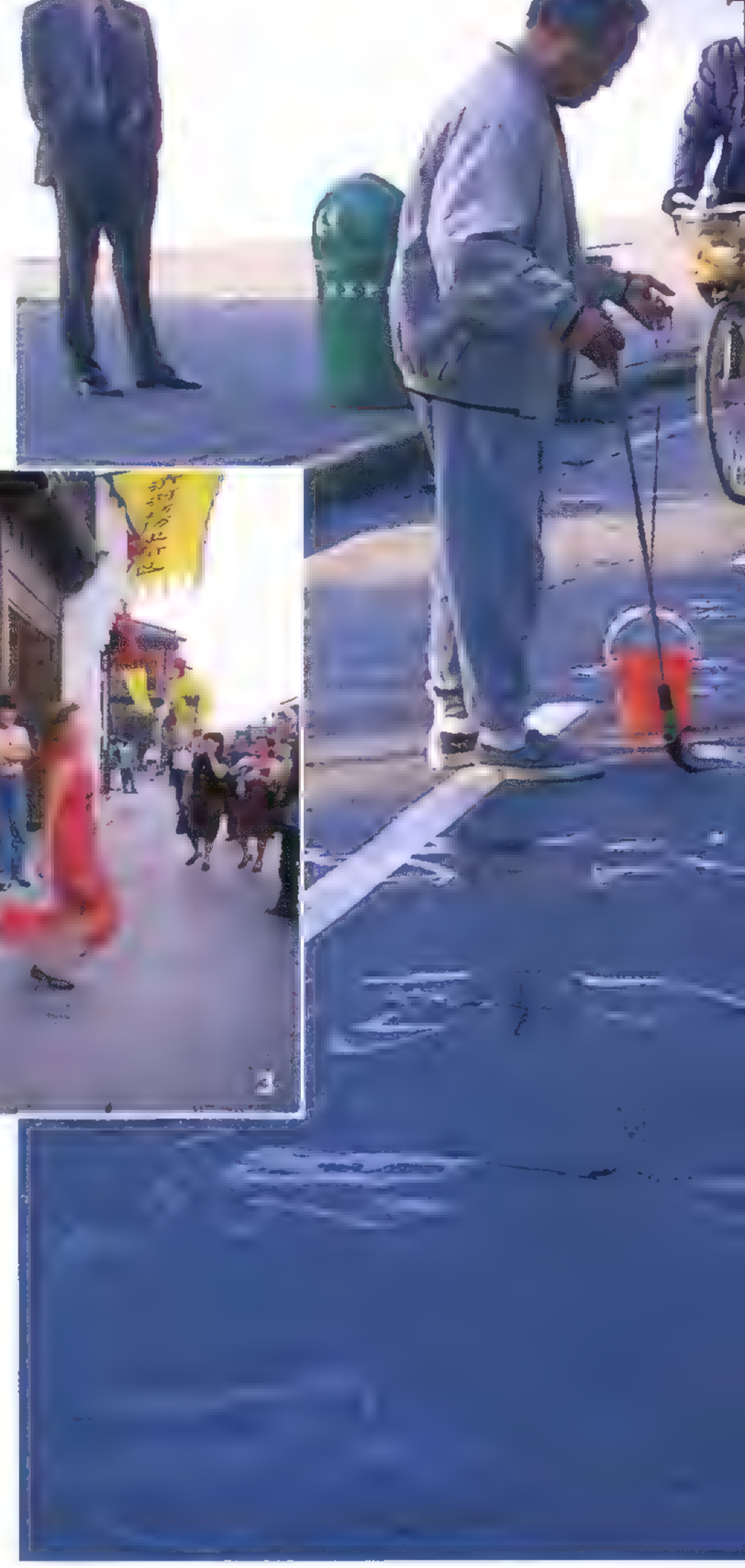
Opening time of Leifeng Pagoda:08:00~17:30

Admission: 30 yuan.

【Hangzhou's Real Estate Market Flourishes】

In the early 1980s, Norodom Sihanouk, the monarch of Cambodia, visited Hangzhou. After a tour of Three Pools Mirroring the Moon, he went for dinner at the Louwailou Restaurant by the Bai Causeway. When someone asked him his impression of Hangzhou, he answered: "Beautiful West Lake, and a shabby city." It was true that housing conditions for Hangzhou residents were very bad at the time. Standing at the top of Wushan Hill, one saw a vast expanse of small, black, dilapidated houses. Many leaked when it rained. Hangzhou started transforming the old city in the mid-1990s, resulting in the birth of the real estate boom. Prices for houses in the city proper have increased each year starting initially from 1,000 yuan per square metre. Since the new century, real estate businessmen have become richer and richer. Some own BMW cars or even a Rolls-Royce. Very proud of themselves, they declare: We have eliminated the housing priced at 4,000 yuan per square metre in Hangzhou. The year before last, Hangzhou won the "best residential environment" award from the United States. Last year Hangzhou was named as an "International Garden City". All thiese good news have promoted the development of Hangzhou's real estate. As a result, house prices are soaring.

The Zhongda Wuzhuang Residential Quarter near Orioles Singing in the Willows at



1. A fireworks show is held every October during the West Lake International Expo'
2. Hangzhou's international image attracts famous brands
3. Qinghefang is an old street as well as an ideal place to shop in Hangzhou
4. Hangzhou locals practise open air Chinese calligraphy beside the West Lake in the morning
5. Newly-weds ride in a decorated old-fashioned car

the foot of Wushan Hill backs on to the hill and faces the West Lake. A Singapore architect designed this residential zone with its excellent environment. The materials for building the external walls were imported from Europe, and the french windows from Germany. The apartments in the residential zone sell for between 13,000 and 25,000 yuan per square metre. Even before construction was finished, the most expensive apartment in the quarter, costing over eight million yuan, was sold. "Yesterday two women bosses from Wenzhou came. Each bought an apartment and they paid cash," Hua Wei, a staff member from the nousing sales department told me, "Wenzhou people are very rich." "Is the price of the apartments in Wuzhuang the highest in Hangzhou?" I asked. "No. The apartments in the Times Square by the West Lake sell for 30,000 yuan per square metre."

【Relaxing at Teahouses and Cafes】

In October, the autumnal air by the West Lake is full of the sweet fragrance of osmanthus. If you want to understand

Hangzhou well, you'd better visit the teahouses, cafes and bars scattered around the city. Teahouses can be found everywhere in Hangzhou, reflecting the leisurely and carefree life led by its peop.e. Hangzhou's teahouses, such as Qingteng (Green Rattan) Teahouse, Hubanju (Lakeside) Teahouse and Lanbao (Blue Treasure) Teahouse, are mainly sited in the area near Hubin Park. Two women own the three-storeyed Qingteng Teahouse. Knowing full well the way to relax is to drink tea, they attract customers with a variety of local snacks. The once chief editor of a literary magazine owns the Hubanju Teahouse. At sunset, it is full of poetic charm as you sit in the teahouse and appreciate the shimmering of the waves while drinking tea. Lanbao Teahouse is elegantly furnished, making customers feel comfortable. Qinghefang, the old city proper of Hangzhou, is another place where many teahouses can be found. After walking through the Qinghefang Memorial Archway, visitors come to a road paved with chiseled stones. These teahouses have a traditional appeal, and are known for their Taiji and Taihe tea ceremonies, and Big Bowl Tea.

Cafes, introduced from overseas, meet the needs of a large number of young people and fashion-conscious intellectuals. In my view, the main difference between tea and coffee is that the latter is challenging. The advent of coffee has changed habits and overturned a style of life. Teahouse customers love to drink tea one cup after another in the morning, while people go to cafes mainly in the evening. If you enter the Starbucks Coffee, you will find most customers are fashionably dressed, white-collar workers with a few foreigners, and the music is slow and gentle. Li Xia, the manager of the Starbucks Cafe, said the cafe provided customers with a different lifestyle, a leisure idea based on coffee, and a third place other than home or office.

Customers here may forget their hard work for the time being, and relax while cradling a cup of coffee. The Shangdao Cafe founded by a Taiwanese reflects that Taiwan culture and mainland China culture spring from the same origins. This cafe also serves set meals, catering for those who love a leisured and romantic life.

【Dazzling Bars in Hangzhou】

Nanshan Road is flanked by many bars, such as the Night & Day, Fengfang (Honeycomb), Liulian (Lingering) and Xiaoyi (Smiling) bars. When the road on the southern

bank of the West Lake was upgraded not long ago, many old bars were demolished. Now a bevy of new bars are being built. Lined by towering plane trees and with an attractive environment, Nanshan Road resembles Hengshan Road in Shanghai. However most Shanghai bars are old while those in Hangzhou are very young. The old bars are quiet and calm, often casually revealing some secrets, like old Kela in the Song of Eternal Hatred, the novel by Wang Anyi. The young like to show off, ride the wind and cleave the waves, and will never hide things they think should be revealed. Most customers at the bars on Nanshan Road are fashionable young people. Maybe because it is very near the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts.

The Paradise on Earth on Shuguang Road is the largest supermarket in Hangzhou, and here you can find two bars-one noisy and the other quiet. The noisy bar features loud music and subdued light, smoky and rose-coloured. Under the fluctuating lights, the young people dance madly to the music to fully express their feelings. The quiet bar is actually not quiet

at all, and has performances by singers and a band. But the music and songs are gentle and lyrical. After you have got accustomed to the low light, you notice young lovers sitting at the tables.

Walking outside from the bar, I felt the air had never been so fresh. It was drizzling. Raindrops glistened under colourful neon lamps and dim street lamps. I stopped a brand new Passat taxi and left the place.

Translated by Kuang Peihua

1. **Nanshan Road is a famous "bar street" in Hangzhou with many Western taverns and restaurants**
2. **A nightly jazz show is staged in the Night & Day Bar, popular with Hangzhou youngsters**
3. **The owner of the tradtional Taiji Teahouse at Qinghefang is a tea culture scholar**
4. **Three young Hangzhou girls dressed like cartoon characters**
5. **Starbucks Coffee Shop marks a new lifestyle for Hangzhou people**

【Travel Tips】

❖ **Transport**

By Air Scheduled flights go from Hong Kong to Hangzhou every day. A one-way air ticket costs about HK$1,420. Duration: 2 hours. There are at least two daily scheduled flights from Shenzhen to Hangzhou, and a one-way air ticket costs about RMB 1,180. Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes.

Transport in Hangzhou Hangzhou has more than 2,100 **public buses**, and over 550 air-conditioned buses. During the rush hour, buses come at intervals of between 4~6 minutes. **Taxis** charge 10 yuan for the first 4 km. Fare: 1.8 yuan/ km. Rental for a **hand-operated pleasure boat** for 6 people comes to 80 yuan/ hour. It takes about 75 minutes for a **tourist bus** to go around the West Lake, costing 30 yuan per person. Those who travel by themselves may tour the West Lake by bike. **Bicycles** can be hired at the following two hotels:

Overseas Chinese Hotel: 15 Hubin Rd Tel: 87074401-6658. The hourly hire fee for a bicycle is 6 yuan, with a deposit of 300 yuan.

Wanghubao Hall: 2 Huancheng Rd W Tel: 87071024-369.

Hourly hire fee here for a bicycle is 5 yuan with a deposit of 500 yuan.

❖ **Accommodation** Hangzhou has many hotels. The **Hangzhou Shangri-La Hotel** by Xileng Bridge has attractive surroundings. Guests can enjoy views of beautiful West Lake from the hotel windows. A standard hotel room costs RMB 880 a day. **Zhejiang Xizi State Guesthouse**, close to the Leifeng Pagoda, once received many state leaders such as Mao Zedong. It stands beside the West Lake in a first-class environment. A standard hotel room costs 660 yuan a day. There are many **middle range hotels** in Hangzhou, with the daily charge for a standard room between 150 and 200 yuan. During the seven-day holiday on May Day, National Day and at the Spring Festival, some **local families** take in tourists. The Hangzhou Kuaibao can help tourists find suitable local family lodgings. Tel: (571) 8510 0000.

❖ **Delicacies** Hangzhou cuisine features seasonal vegetables, meticulous preparation, beautiful colours and light and delicious tastes. In recent times Hangzhou cuisine has become very popular throughout the country. Famous **traditional Hangzhou dishes** include Dongpo Pork, West Lake Sour Fish, Dragon Well Tea and Shrimp Meat, etc. Louwailou Restaurant offers the best traditional Hangzhou cuisine. Local restaurants constantly create **new dishes**. For instance, the Zhangshengji Restaurant is famous for its Dried Bamboo Shoots with Duck Soup Pot, and the Hongni Restaurant is well known for Fish Head King. The prices of the dishes served by the restaurants are not very expensive. Usually a dinner for three to five people costs 200 to 300 yuan. The well-known restaurants are full of customers all year round. Diners need to make reservations beforehand, but don't need to pay extra service fees, or fees for separate rooms.

❖ **Teahouses and bars:**

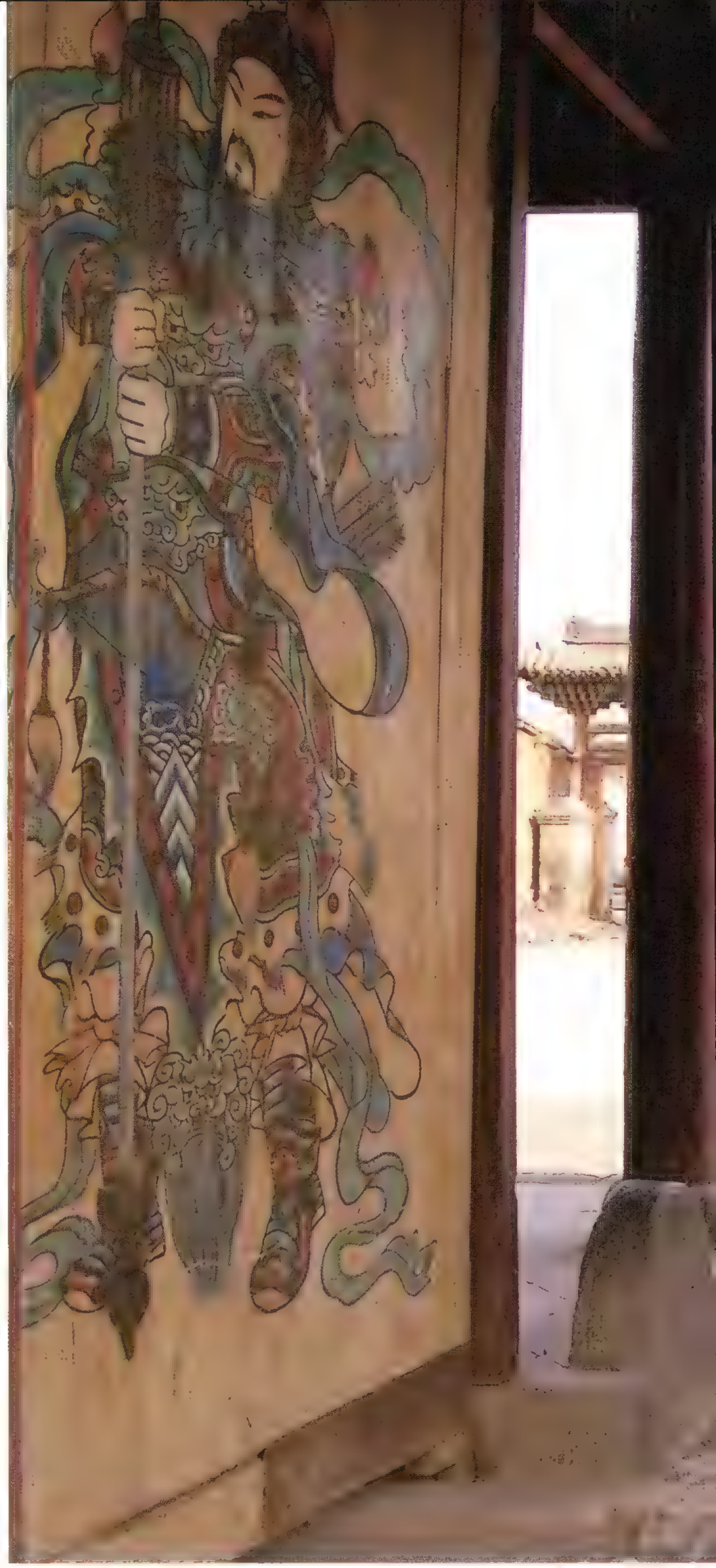
Qingteng Teahouse	Add: 53 Hubin Rd	Price: 45~80 yuan/ person
Lanbao Teahouse	Add: 60 Hubin Rd	Price: 38 yuan/ person
Taiji Tea Taoist Hall	Add: Qinghefang	Price: 10 yuan/ person
Hubanju Teahouse	Add: 23 Hubin Rd	Price: 50~100 yuan/ person
Tiantang Renjian (Paradise on Earth)	Add: Zhejiang World Trade Bldg, 15 Shuguang Rd	Price: 150~200 yuan/ person
Night & Day	Add: 240 Nanshan Rd	Price: 120 yuan/ person

(Jazz music is performed after 9:30 p m. From the outdoor bar on the third floor, customers may enjoy a nice view of the West Lake.)

Ups and Downs of Historic Chieftains' Offices

Photos & article by Shi Baoxiu

The Chinese word "tusi" (土司) generally refers to the system of appointing national minority hereditary headmen in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The purpose of the system was for "local officials to rule the local people". The offices of these chieftains were all known as "yamen" (衙門). The "tusi" system was finally abolished in 1932. The government offices of one such "tusi" appointee, Chieftain Lu, are located at Liancheng Town in Yongdeng County, Gansu Province. Built in the Ming Dynasty, they have witnessed the rise and decline of 19 Mongolian tribes.



I took the old road from the county seat of Yongdeng for Liancheng Town only now the noise and crowds of yesteryear had long gone. In the old days of the Ming and Qing dynasties and even during the period before 1949 in particular, people detoured along this road when they went to Qinghai and Tibet, to avoid the menacingly steep valleys of the Yellow and Huangshui rivers. The road also led to the chieftain's offices of the Mongolian princes who had the surname "Lu"(魯) bestowed on them by the Ming royal court.

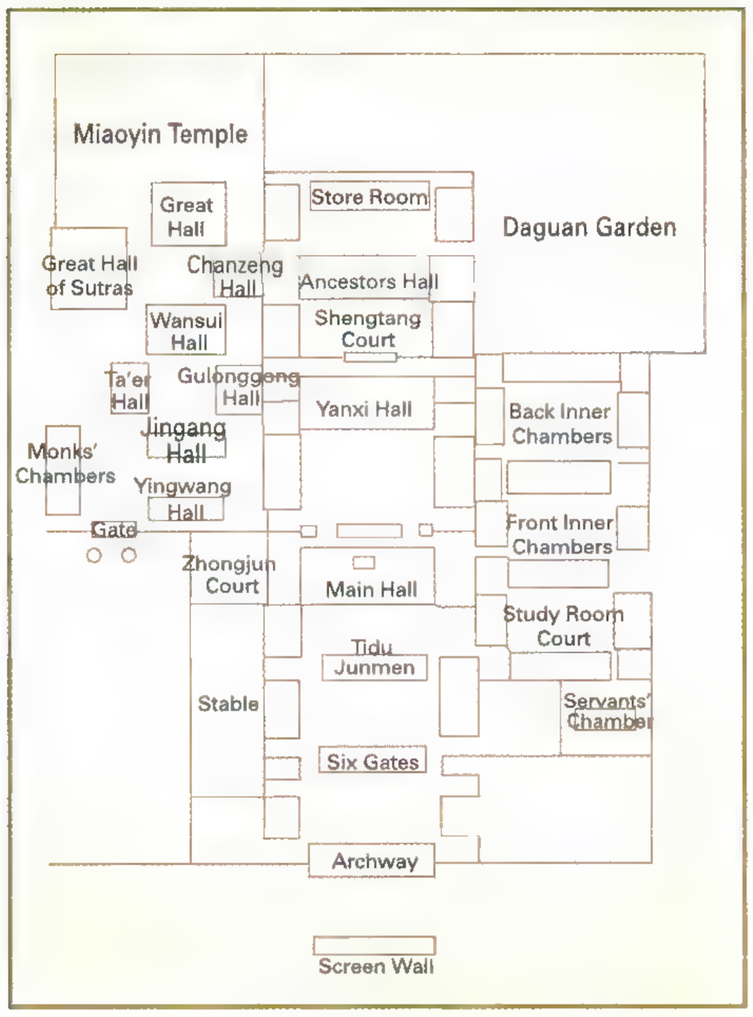
Confucius-style Complex Deep in the Mountains

Chieftain Lu's offices at Liancheng stand in the widest street in town, stretching directly to the bank of the Datong River.

I first entered through the second-level main entrance. On the six gates were painted imposing armour-clad generals, weapons in their hands. The large yard was paved with square bricks. Opposite

was another main entrance, with an inscription on a horizontal plaque above it that read "Tidu Junmen"(提督軍門)which means "military gates of generals". There was a "life way" and a "death way" on either side of the gate. In olden times, the chieftains were responsible for administrating local justice and any punishments. After a trial, convicted criminals were sent out under escort through the appropriate side gate according to whether they had been sentenced to death or

1. Children play snooker under an archway in the historic government offices
2. The ancestral hall of Chieftain Lu's offices lies on the same axis as the main entrances to all the other halls
3. A ruin watchtower in ancient times



imprisonment. In the Main Hall the chieftains met, received imperial decrees, held important ceremonies, and administered justice. Beyond the Main Hall stand the Ruyi Gate, Yanxi Hall where guests were entertained, and Sunshine Gate. And at the back, the Ancestors Hall where the memorial tablets of generations of chieftains were kept.

"Tusi yamen", or the chieftain's offices have a symmetrical design. From a protecting wall in the street immediately outside the first-level main entrance, the layout axis lets you see through all the gates and directly into the Ancestors Hall if the gates are open.

In a side room on the left of the Ancestors Hall is a set of hidden steps made of wood, still appearing strong enough. Climbing up the ladder and looking around, I found wide and bright verandahs running in four directions, with nothing to prevent me enjoying the view. This building was the highest part of the chieftain's offices. For more than 500 years from the time of its construction until the 1980s, it remained the highest edifice in Liancheng Town. The Ming imperial court decreed the imposing building be constructed to commemorate Madam Ma who by trickery had killed by a notorious gangster in the west of the Yellow River; as a result it was originally known as Xiaozhong (Pledge Loyalty) Tower.

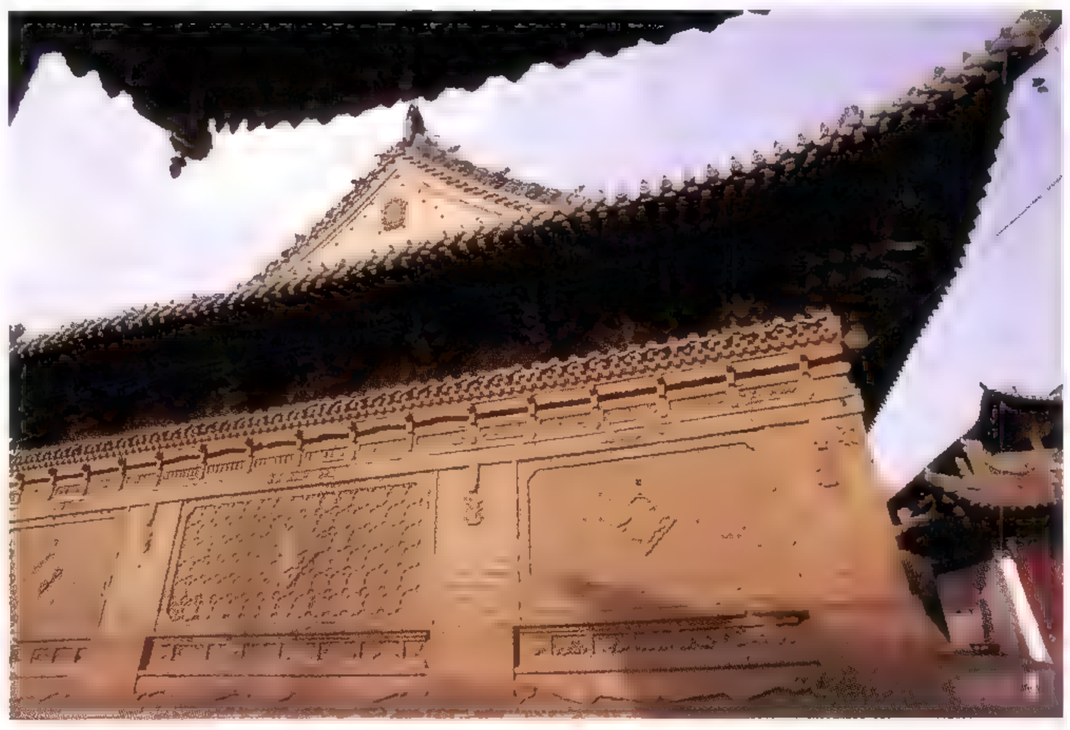
Looking north over the carved balustrades, I saw the Datong River become narrower and narrower before finally disappearing into the steep mountains. On the left the Miaoyin (Wonderful Merit) Temple adjoined the west wall of the offices. This is the largest Tibetan Buddhist temple in the Liancheng Town area, whose palaces and sutra rooms are all elaborately sculpted and painted, architecturally finer than the office buildings. An alleyway runs between the temple and the offices, so narrow one can just turn around in it. Built and maintained by generations of chieftains, the temple was something like their family shrine.

From the south side of the wooden building, one can overlook the entire offices. Five Chinese traditional rectangular courtyards are arrayed in turn, straight up to the Archway. The three courtyards of the chieftain's inner residence were in the front half, very close to the eastern wall of the offices — all ruins of the Ming Dynasty. What a pity the houses had collapsed, with many doors and windows dismantled. It was a desolate scene indeed. Behind the residence lay the back garden. Some stone statues of people and horses have been transferred here from the chieftains' burial ground and placed under three big walnut trees. The Liancheng Town folk call this place the Daguan (Big Officials) Garden.

The three-in-one layout of historic government offices, Miaoyin Temple and residence closely resembles the Confucius Mansion and Confucius Temple. Considering the remoteness of its setting in the wild mountains of Northwest China and having such a small manor of about 100 sq km, an architectural complex like the chieftain's offices is certainly a rare wonder.

Emperor Conferred Surname "Lu" on a Mongolian Prince

The original chieftain of the Lu Family was a genuine Mongolian



BED & BOARD

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Overnighting With White Tigers

— Stay at the Guangzhou Chime Long Hotel

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

Chengji called upon his subjects to bury the bodies, granting them 1.5 kg of grain for every corpse they buried. In no time the corpses from all around were grabbed and disposed off. However some dying people were also buried alive, the lifesaving largess from Chieftain proving too much of a temptation.

Ultimately though, Lu Chengji was rather a playboy, full of bad habits, indulging in falconry, hounds, gambling, opium and prostitutes. Although he had lived an easy life since his childhood, he was good at horsemanship and marksmanship.

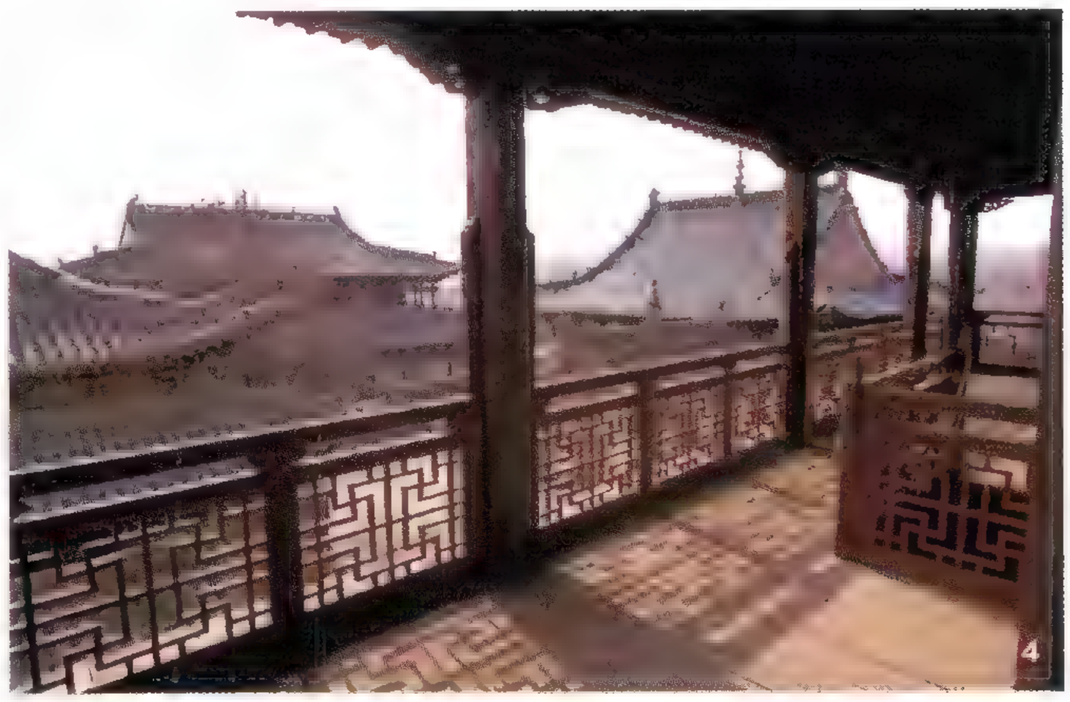
In 1932, however, the government introduced a new system for governing minority areas, replacing the hereditary tenure of the chieftains with officials regularly appointed for specific terms of service. This brought misfortune to the last "tusi", and Lu Chengji had to lay down the sceptre which he had enjoyed for only six years.

On May 16, 1951, the Yongdeng County Government shot Lu Chengji on the banks of the Datong River for murdering his maid. Shortly after his death, his son died of illness, ending the line of the Liancheng Town chieftains.

Luckily the "yamen" still remains, in which the stories of the chieftains live on for each new generation.

Translated by Huang Deyuan

1. The manor of the Lu Family chieftains used to include lands in Gansu and Qinghai provinces
2. Stone animals transferred from the tombs of the chieftains
3. Most people of the Tu ethnic minority now living in Tianzhu and Huzhu were previously the subjects of the Lu Family
4. The view from the top floor of the Ancestors Hall, built by imperial decree to commemorate Madam Ma who was the wife of chieftain Tuo Huan



Background of the Chieftain System in Liancheng Town

Article by Zhao Decai

To unite and control the ethnic minorities in Northwest and Southwest China, the central governments of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties carried out a special policy, granting hereditary official posts and manors to the chieftains of each tribe and letting them rule the local people. The troops of the chieftains undertook duties required of them by the central government, guarding the borders or the cities in the inner lands. Though obliged to pay tribute to the imperial court, the chieftains enjoyed autonomy in terms of the local troops and people, and the forests, lands and products within their jurisdiction. Those in Liancheng Town were the most influential among many in Northwest China. From 1369 to 1932, lasted 19 generations, more than 560 years.

Structure of the Chieftain's Office of the Lu Family

Six Offices: in charge of stamps, seals, official documents and letters and other secretarial duties; grains, fodder and financial affairs; weapons, armour and other equipment; judicature and local public security; various ceremonies and sacrifices.
Three Squads: arresting criminals and alleged criminals, maintaining order in the courtroom during trials and managing the jails, and sending messages. The three squads were in the charge of one of the six offices.
Bodyguard Team: Responsible for the security of the chieftains at home and outdoors.
Chamberlain: Responsible for the daily lives of the chieftains and their families.

Local Troops The chieftains distributed some farmland within their jurisdiction to the indigenous people, called "military lands". Every household had a piece of military land, and one family member was chosen to join the army, generation by generation. In peacetime the soldiers stayed at home farming their land, and in wartime were mustered to be soldiers.

Indigenous People The indigenous people ruled by the chieftain of the Lu Family mainly included such nationalities as Han, Tibetan, Tu and Mongolian. They did not pay taxes to the central government, nor did they have to go on corvees. Their civil affairs came under the jurisdiction of the office of the Lu Family. And when an indigenous person violated the "tusi" system or the laws , the office of the Lu Family could independently sentence him or her to imprisonment or death.

The Daily Lives of Lu Chieftains

The chieftains wore official suits bestowed by the courts whenever they received a decree, hosted an official, held a sacrifice, or went on a tour of inspection. But on normal days they wore civilian clothes. When the chieftains had their meals, the servants on duty made ceremonial calls and music would be played. On long trips the chieftains took carriages or rode horses; on short ones, they rode in sedan chairs carried by four porters. Whenever the chieftains went out, a three gun salute was fired.

the rebels. That battle was vital for the suppression of the rebellion, and Lu Hualing succeeded in defeating the enemy. In 1723 (the first year of the Yongzheng reign in the Qing Dynasty), Lu Hualing followed Great General Nian Gengyao for a punitive expedition against a rebellion by Tibetan people in Qinghai Province. Lu Hualing and his troops fought several desperate battles and killed hundreds of Tibetans. As a result he was credited with more military exploits and promoted to the position of Chief Commander of Liangzhou Prefecture. He was also chief-of-staff of a firearms brigade in the Xi'an Prefecture. That was the final flowering of the Lu Family. After the death of Lu Hualing in 1756 (the 21st year of the Qianlong reign in the Qing Dynasty), the family produced no more outstanding chieftains.

Omen of the "Tusi" System Decline

Like our view of the moon constantly changes, it seems that fame and prosperity are always shadowed by corruption and decline. The chieftains from the 13th generation to the 19th not only failed to achieve military glory, but also indulged in comfortable living and spent money like water. Lu Fengzhyu, the 13th chieftain, for instance, did nothing more than lavish funds on building his garden in the back residence and his villa in the mountains. Lu Shixun, the 15th, even spent a million liang (1/20 kg) of silver rebuilding the temple for his two sons who had become monks. The local armies of that time became slack in their drill too, indulged in leisure and entertainment, and completely lost their former valour. In 1781 (the 46th year of the Qianlong reign in the Qing Dynasty), the Hui people from the Hezhou Prefecture (Linxia) attacked Lanzhou, the capital of present-day Gansu Province. Lu Fan, the family's 14th tusi chieftain, led his local army to help the besieged city but the whole troop was annihilated. During the Tongzhi reign (from 1862 to 1874) in the Qing Dynasty, Lu Rugao, the 17th chieftain, led the local army to fight an uprising of Hui people in the Tanshan Ranges and the Haishiwan Bay, but again the entire army perished.

Intermarriage also accelerated the family's decline. After the 15th generation, four generations of the Lu Family married the daughters of the princes of Alax. As a result the offspring of the Lu Family became weaker and weaker. Lu Tao, the 18th, was mentally weak and died young, breaking the family's line.

The Fate of the Last Chieftain

The 19th chieftain, Lu Chengji, was also a clansman of the Lu Family but he was not in the direct line of chieftainly descent. In 1926, the young tusi chieftain of the last generation took his post.

We should remember Lu Chengji for several notable achievements during his time in office. He funded the setting up of Western-style schools, vacating the second hall and the library house on the left of the yamen for use as student dormitories. Another success was related to Little Commander Ma Zhongying of the Hui ethnic minority. When Ma Zhongying rebelled in 1928, Lu Chengji immediately organized and drilled his troops. At the same time, he brought Tibetan soldiers from Qinghai to patrol Liancheng Town so it escaped damage during the insurrection. His final credits were earned in 1929. A severe famine occurred in the spring and summer of that year and people starved to death throughout the counties around Liancheng Town. To ensure the survival of his subjects, Lu Chengji opened his granaries and set up gruel sheds (charity feeding centres where gruel was offered to hungry people in old China) to relieve the starvation. At the news grain was available in Liancheng that could save their lives, the starving people nearby hurried there. But sadly, many died before they reached Liancheng, leaving corpses everywhere near the town and along the roads. Lu

named Tuo Huan. An imperial clansman of Emperor Yuandi of the Yuan Dynasty, he used to have the title of King of Wuding (Conquer-Through-Force), and took the post of deputy prime minister, a rather high rank in the Yuan Dynasty. After the Ming Dynasty destroyed the Yuan, he came over to the Ming and pledged his loyalty. Because of his military exploits in putting down a Mongolian rebellion, the court rewarded Tuo by appointing him to the Zhuanglang Prefecture, the area of present-day Yongdeng.

Later, Tuo Huan's son and grandsons also gained military glory by resisting and suppressing other Mongolian tribes on behalf of the Ming emperors. To placate his subjects after he transferred the capital to Beijing, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming Dynasty rewarded the meritorious ministers. To honour Tuo Huan, his wife, son and grandsons, Emperor Chengzu conferred the surname "Lu" and some manorial rights on Tuo Huan's grandson Shijia. The offspring of Tuo Huan had a hereditary government office bestowed on them, controlling the local officials, armies and soldiers in Zhuanglang. From then on the Lu Family became loyal subjects of the court and a distinct clan in Northwest China, raising themselves to prominence step by step.

Outstanding Military Exploits

Shijia was renamed Lu Xian after the surname Lu was bestowed by the emperor. The Lu Family was said to reach the height of its power and splendour from Lu Shijia's appointment as a hereditary "tusi" at the third level of the principal rank in the official system, until the reign of Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty. During the period from Lu Xian, the third generation, to Lu Yunchang, the ninth generation, and further on to Lu Hualing, the 12th generation, the patriarchs were all promoted by the courts to be important local ministers at the first or second levels of the ranks of officialdom. Some of them were even included in the biographies of generals in the official historical record, *The History of the Ming Dynasty*.

Outstanding chieftains often left their own manors to take temporary posts throughout China, becoming influential ministers of the courts. Lu Keng, the family's fourth patriarch, for example, went to the Jiayuguan Pass to halt and defeat the Mongolians attacking central China in 1448 (the 13th year of the Zhengtong reign in the Ming Dynasty), capturing some rebel chiefs alive. Later he went to Ningxia Town to suppress the uprising of Hui people in 1468 (the fourth year of the Chenghua reign in the Ming Dynasty). He also achieved a series of other notable victories. As a result he was promoted from commander of 100 households to a local commander-in-general, and finally to chief commander of Gansu Province, at the second rank of Ming Dynasty officialdom. In *The History of the Ming Dynasty*, a special biography of him sang his praises: "Lu Keng was talented and brave. Risking arrows and stones in battle whenever he and his troops met enemies, he was not frightened even though he was hurt several times. Therefore his military exploits accumulated and became a Great General of high rank."

Lu Guangzu, the eighth chieftain of the Lu Family, was also promoted to Commander-in-Chief of Nine Entrances in Nanjing. In the Qing Dynasty, Lu Hualing, the 12th chieftain, once fought under the leadership of Yue Zhongqi, a famous general of the period. In 1719 (the 58th year of the Kangxi reign in the Qing Dynasty), some Tibetan rebels rose up, and Yue dispatched Lu Hualing to attack a fortress occupied by

1. The upturned eaves and ornate stone walls viewed from the Great Hall of Sutras
2. The banks of the Datong River were once part of the manor of the chieftains
3. Two nuns enter the chieftain's offices through the Six Gates en route to the Miaoyin Temple
4. The lattice window reaches the ceiling in the Yanxi Hall

Simply staying for the night in a hotel is no longer enough for today's tourists. They demand much more, their list might include a romantic atmosphere, charming features, the tastiest of foods. Without such highlights even the most luxurious hotel could seem run of the mill, nothing more than "a nest for a bird at night". Recently I visited Chime-Long Night Zoo in Guangzhou, and was agreeably amazed by the Chime Long Hotel beside the park.

We brought the children to Dashi Town, Panyu. After spending the day at the Xiangjiang Safari Park, we continued on to the Chime-Long Night Zoo for the non-stop pleasure of being with animals. The last item on our itinerary was the grand Russian circus show, a happy ending to a very enjoyable day for both adults and children. Tired, we then made for the Chime Long Hotel where we had a reservation. We were revived by the delightful surprise awaiting us there.

The Style of Wild Africa

The hotel has a tropical look, its pyramid roofed buildings well laid out. The spacious square in front of the hotel is dotted with tall tropical palm trees. The most impressive are the two imported "bottle trees" by the hotel entrance. Very expensive, each cost 300,000 yuan. You feel as though you are in Africa. More than a dozen bronze pillars holding blazing torches in the middle of the square look spectacular, each one so big it would take several men to encircle it. The pillars feature inscribed totems and the flames on top cast shadows over the huge trees around about, all creating a mysterious sense of pre-history.

Wild animals proliferate inside the lobby. A huge bronze sculpture of antelope with curved horns dominates the centre, and lights fashioned from deer antlers hang from the ceiling. Zoological specimens abound, the most lively looking a female giraffe with its baby.

The rooms are larger than in other places. The furniture and ornaments generate a very pleasant atmosphere, all simply designed with a natural look. Made of wood and fabric, their forms are basic with a hint of the wild, without any artificial modification.

Breakfast with White Tigers

Well rested, we rose in the morning to be delighted by the panorama of unbroken vegetation we could see from our balcony, with areca trees and slender tree ferns near by. The animal world park extends over 6,000 *mu* (400 hectares) with different types of lush vegetation — African-style jungles, Asian forests, grasslands and creeping vines. They are home to more than 10,000 creatures. The cries of the wildlife could be heard occasionally.

At the centre of the hotel complex is a spacious swimming pool

1. A spacious swimming pool was surrounded by hotel construction complex
2. Two big white tigers are playing at the central garden

surrounded by tropical vegetation, with a white tiger sculpture to one side.

1

The white tiger is probably the most precious possession at both the Xiangjiang and Chime-Long animal worlds. An extremely endangered species, only about 200 are said to still exist in the world, with 40 of them kept here. After seeing white tigers outside, we quite unexpectedly met them again inside the hotel.

Passing the enclosed garden on our way to the White Tiger Restaurant downstairs for some Western food, we saw two big tigers playing. People stopped, riveted by the scene behind the glass wall, in the same way you look at goldfish in a tank.

Window seats in the restaurant must be popular, I thought. I rushed there and grabbed one with a good view. I watched those animal kings in their "tank" while having my breakfast. A small fishbowl was placed on each table, with goldfish merrily swimming inside. Another happy surprise for me, and what an original idea!

2

Flamingoes and Alligators Highlights

Actually, there are two gardens inside the main building of the hotel. Opposite the white tiger enclosure to the west is another one for flamingoes on the eastern side, also with glass partitions. A shallow pool lined with pebbles spreads through the flamingo garden, where chrysanthemum, marine alga, oil palms and Indian padauk trees make a tropical marsh. Several dozen flamingoes were enjoying themselves there, ignoring the people around.

Flamingoes are found mainly in wetland areas in west and north Africa, always living in colonies. Some here were completely crimson, some snowy white. With their long, thin legs and necks, humorous beaks and elegant ways they were like white-clothed graceful scholars in Chinese history. Waiters told us the birds were white when young and turned crimson when adult.

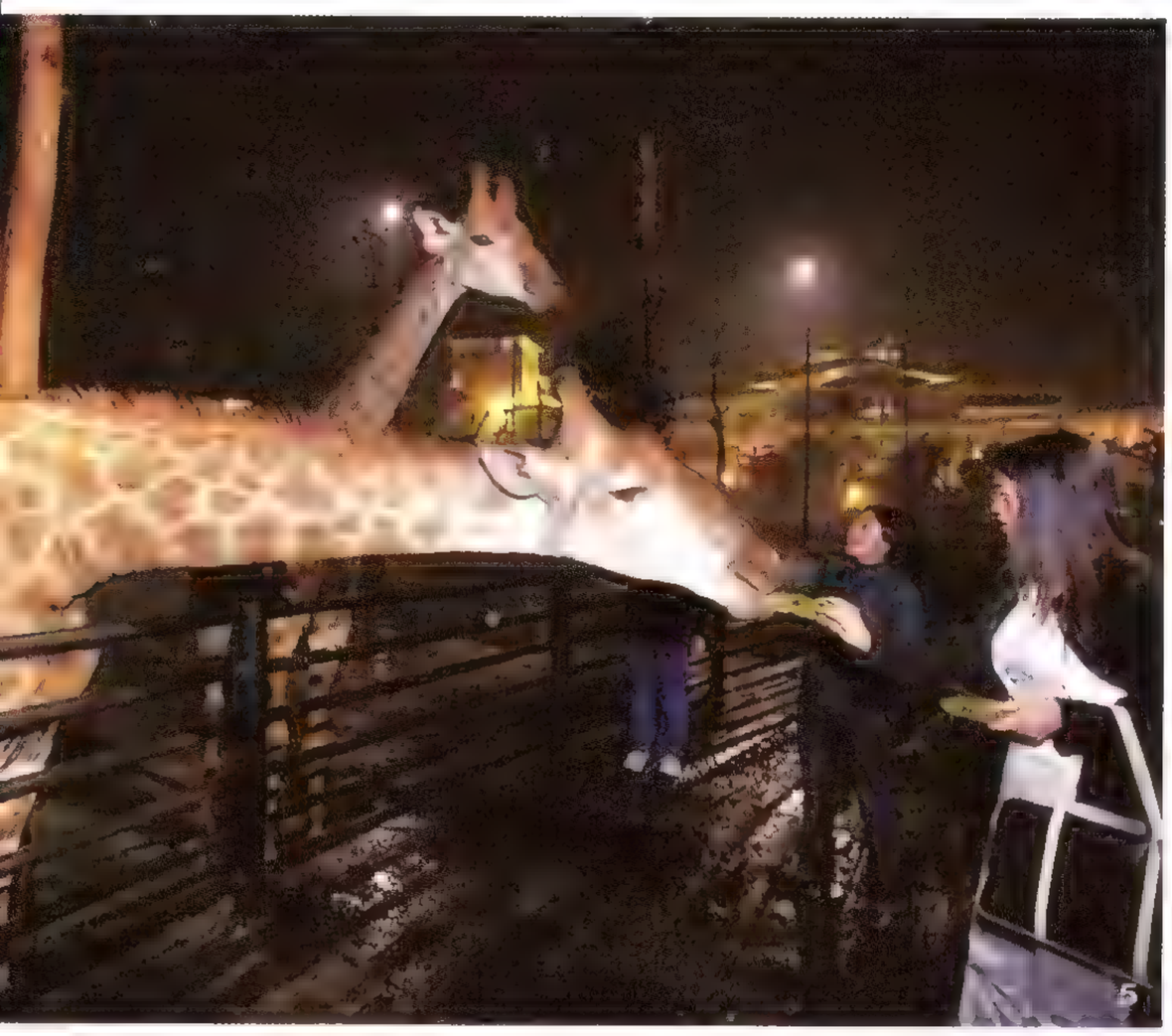
The hotel's decorative motifs all feature unusual and interesting animals, giving a feel of wild Africa. Along the walls of the porch are several huge crocodile specimens. When alive, each was over 60 years

old, four metres long and weighed over 1,000 kg. The porch gate is made of ancient wood, its handles in an abstract tiger design. The carving above the gate shows an African man and a woman in the jungle about to open the gates for tourists into their tree hut. African plant motifs decorate the hotel floors and railings.

Eager to learn more, I enquired further about the hotel. It is the only one in China to replicate a South African setting. The only other hotel with an enclosed white tiger garden is in Las Vegas. The hotel rooms have different styles in different colours, green for casual rooms and red for rooms featuring hunted game. Among them is a splendid presidential suite copied from an ancient Egyptian royal palace, with many wildlife specimens and an African style garden. Whether it's royal luxury or a palace for the kings of wildlife you want, here you will be indulged to the limits.

Reluctantly we checked out at noon. Our first thought as we left was that this was a unique place we must bring friends to.

1. On each dining table, a small glass fishbowl was placed, with goldfish merrily swimming inside
2. The lobby is full of the smells of the open country
3. Several dozens of flamingoes were enjoying themselves at imitation tropical marsh
4. The decoration of White Tiger Restaurant is novel and interesting
5. Chime-Long Night Zoo is just beside the hotel



TRAVEL TIPS

Features:

Chime Long Hotel (5-star) is the first animal themed ecological one in China, It covers an area of 120,000 square metres with 328 rooms in different styles and each has balconies with view. The smallest standard room is no less than 50 square metres in floor space. Many animal specimens and live ones give a South African scene.

Dining:

The Crocodile Lounge on the second floor. The White Tiger Restaurant on the first floor, where buffet is available for three meals and orders for Western dishes are done by excellent chefs. Qilin Chinese Restaurant serves food in Guangdong and Chaozhou styles. The Yuanleju Tea House on the second floor is ideal for a Kungfu tea experience, with snacks and side dishes, nice for an intimate talk by friends.

Entertainment:

Amusement centre on the first floor and outdoors, including rooms for Sauna, feet massage, billiards, poker, chess-game, ping pong, bowling, and computer games, gymnasiums, outdoor tennis courts, outdoor and indoor swimming pools, and ballrooms for dancing and Karaoke.

Hotel Reservations:

Through tickets for two days in the hotel:

Including 1. Tickets for two for direct boat service between Hong Kong and Panyu; 2. A standard twin-bedroom for one night; 3. Entrance tickets at discount for Chime-Long Night Zoo; 4. Shuttle bus service between the hotel and the port; 5. Western style breakfast for two; 6. Free use of Sauna, swimming pool and gymnasium.

Through tickets for two: Sunday ~ Thursday: HK$ 1,216.
Friday ~ Saturday: HK$ 1,219

Entrance ticket for Chime-Long Night Zoo:
HK$ 115 for adult, HK$ 75 for children (1.1~1.4 metres in height)

* All the prices subject to change at the time of purchase

Reservation: Hong Kong China Tourism Ltd. Tel: (852) 2516 9228 Fax: (852) 2563 7994
Add: 2401, 24/F Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, H.K.

Transportation:

Travel to Xiangjiang Safari Park and Chime-Long Night Zoo: Direct boat service is available from China Hong Kong City Pier in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, H.K., to Panyu, Nansha or Lianhuashan. Ticket: $110~120. Then transfer to a bus or a mini-bus to Dashi Town. At the gates of both animal worlds, free shuttle bus service is available between Xiangjiang Hotel (3-star) and Chime Long Hotel.

Tel: (20) 8478 6838 Website: http://www.c-1.com.cn Email: clht@vip.sina.com

Tourist Spots:

Two tourists sites are in the area of Yingbin Road and Dashi in Panyu, where Chime Long Hotel is located.

Xiangjiang Safari Park

Add: Dashi Town, Panyu, Guangzhou Opening hours: 9:00~18:00

Transportation: Several bus routes are available to there, including Special Route 247 from Dashatou, Guangzhou, No. 288 from Guangzhou Railway Station, No. 282 and others from Guangzhou to Shiqiao, Panyu.
Tel: (20) 8478 3333

Chime-Long Night Zoo

Add: Yingbin Road, Panyu, Guangzhou Opening hours: 16.30~23.00

Grand Acrobatic Show: 20:00~21:00

Dedicated to Her Cause

Rebecca Li

Photos by Dianna Lau & courtesy of Rebecca Li

Article by Dianna Lau

Since 1985, when Rebecca Li Lok Si accidentally became involved with polar research, her name has virtually become synonymous with the "three poles of the Earth". As she became better known, many assumed she was either of independent means of sufficiently well paid to enable her to undertake dedicated and unconditional research work in polar areas. Otherwise, who would be willing to give up the chance to make money in such a money and success oriented society? However, what was once a dream is now a reality, but only because she is prepared to sacrifice all else in pursuit of her cause.

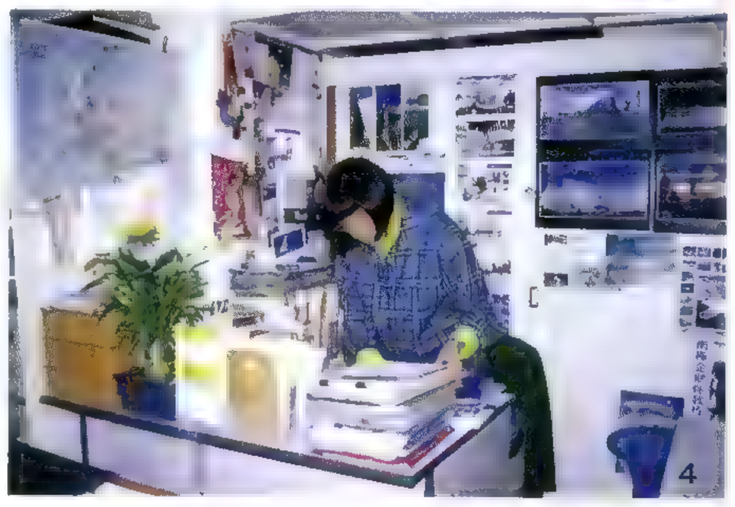
I interviewed Rebecca in the place she visits most often — the Foreign Correspondents Club (FCC) in Hong Kong's bustling district of Central.

C: China Tourism R: Rebecca Li

A Typical Day...

C: Can you describe your everyday schedule?

R: I live nearby. Every morning, I come here to sip a cup of tea and read the newspapers. Then, I go to the office close by and launch into a busy day. Generally, most of the time I spend at the office is taken up with handling requests for information on polar areas from the mass media, community groups, or schools in different places. The photos are provided by us, so we have to do this carefully. Hence the job is very time- and energy- consuming. I've made a CD-ROM, a collection of all those pictures from my past explorations, in the hope of recording this material more completely, as well as letting students absorb information on polar areas from a relatively active perspective. Recently I've been busy reading scripts, and viewing and cutting the films. Usually, I accept invitations from all organisations or schools holding seminars. The content of the seminars caters to the different needs of universities, Band 5 schools, or even kindergartens. My busiest day on record was holding three different lectures in one day, from Eastern District on Hong Kong Island to Tuen Mun in the New Territories. The rush to catch buses and boats was really exhausting. In the last two years I have been organising academic research expeditions for the China Polar Museum Fund, as well as my personal expedition plans, and things. So I am busy seven days every week, with no time for holidays.



1. Frozen polar seas
2. Rebecca Li dressed in traditional Inuit clothes
3. Rebecca with the expedition team to the glaciers at the North Pole in 1994
4. Though extremely busy, Rebecca still keeps her working desk clean and tidy

C: Don't you feel tired?

R: Not if the subject is related to the three poles. Then I will try my very best to help. I won't miss a single opportunity to promote the polar areas to the world.

Where My Money Comes From...

C: In 1985 when the China South Pole Exploration Team showed their achievements in Hong Kong, you were deeply moved. Since then, you have opted for a completely new direction, leaving the highly paid advertising profession, and whole-heartedly devoting yourself to arduous expeditions. In a blink of an eye, more than 10 years have passed. How have you made a living during this period?

R: I was well paid when working in advertising. I divided the money and properties I acquired during those years with my two daughters. Then I spent my own savings bit by bit to carry on my scientific research. Now, my only income comes from the rent of a commercial unit I bought before, which is currently used as the office of the China Polar Museum. I receive a token few thousand dollars from them, and this is almost my only income.

C: Then your income is almost as much as the public subsidy.

R: (wry smile)

C: Are you paid or given any subsidies when writing articles, providing photos, giving lectures or acting as a consultant, or even seeking the help of mainland scientists?

R: Apart from a few hundred dollars for transport expenses for a few annual lectures at the invitation of the Teachers' Association, I basically receive no subsidies for other jobs. Those sincere mainland experts help us for free though we have to pay for their transport to

1

and from the expedition areas and accommodation. As for my transport costs, I feel embarrassed to mention them if the organiser hasn't said anything.

C: Does this mean you pay for your own transport, meals, long-distant calls, and socialising costs, while spending your own time researching information and writing articles, including spending a large sum of money in copying or enlarging photos?

R: Exactly. You reminded me that once some pictures I shot at the South Pole which I sent out through e-mail were pirated by others. I didn't realise until I saw the image of penguins "swimming here and there" on the Internet.

C: Will you investigate that further?

R: Let it be. Firstly, I don't have enough time and energy. Besides, it's tolerable if it helps popularise the message of protecting the polar regions. I would give away anything unconditionally to achieve this.

C: Does "giving away anything unconditionally" also include some of your habits?

R: Yes. I used to buy expensive pretty clothes, but now I don't. A set of casual wear does for any kind of function. I also stopped my Yacht Club membership, keeping only that of the FCC. The club is almost my second home, because I can read the newspapers for free every morning. In my spare time, I exercise at the gymnasium here, which helps me save a great expense. It's also economical and comfortable to meet with friends here. I liked to buy precious ornaments. However, since seeing the sparkling snowflakes in the polar regions, I lost interest in diamonds and jewels.

C: Are there any enthusiasts supporting you financially?

R: Lately, after knowing my situation, a friend of mine actively helps with my public transport expenses, which is thoroughly practical. Usually, I take the MTR (Mass Transit Railway) when going out.

2

3

1. In a world of white, reflections off the ice are more dazzling than any diamond or jewel
2, 3. Based on the principle "have backpack, sleeping bag, travel the world", Rebecca's journeys have widely broadened her horizons

Sometimes when the schedule is too tight, or I don't know the area or I'm carrying heavy items to a lecture, I may need to take a taxi. Transport costs can be surprisingly high. Once I held a lecture at a school. I arrived at the school in a hurry and lectured still all in a sweat, I felt somewhat embarrassed because most of the parents and students arrived in leisurely style in fine cars. Anyway, it's no big deal when compared to the promotion of polar scientific research.

Moments of Pain

C: Has anything depressed you during these years of your promotional work?

R: The physical tiredness is all right, what hurts is the weariness of the soul... (at this, Rebecca unconsciously held her fist tightly)

C: (silent)

R: I've travelled between Hong Kong and the mainland for many years, and as a result am deeply aware of the difference in promoting environmental conservation between the two places. In Hong Kong, one has to spend lots of money on the promotion, exhibition and opening ceremonies before the real action starts. On the mainland, however, though there may only be a small sum of capital available, it will be used directly for research. Moreover, expedition members from the mainland cherish every opportunity to carry out research in polar regions. They can be

The China Polar Museum Foundation

Founded in June 1997 in Hong Kong, the fund aims to:

1. Propose the setting up of a Polar Museum equipped with information, education, and scientific research facilities in Hong Kong and the mainland
2. Promote the importance of the polar areas and environmental conservation, to raise public awareness about the planet
3. Promote and popularise earth science
4. Support scientific research activities in polar areas

Add: 7B, World-wide Commercial Building, 34 Wyndham Street, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2840 0339 E-mail: polarmuseum@ismart.net
Website: http://www.3polar.org

If you want to make donations, please send a cheque payable to (Head: China Polar Museum Foundation.) or a saving receipt (Hong Kong Bank account no.: 450-342027-001 for HK dollars/ HK450342027 for overseas currency) to the above address.

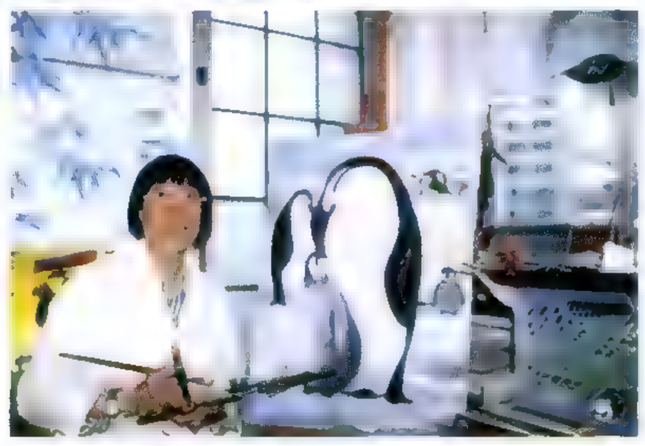
well-educated people, humble scientists, hard-working reporters, or new graduates. There won't be a word of complaint no matter how hard the environment or climate is, or how poor the accommodation facilities are, as they focus on the cause of environmental protection.

As an organiser of expeditions, I have to overcome numerous obstacles such as designing the itineraries, coordinating with scientists, and solving the problem of travel fees for expedition members. And even when we have successfully set off, I still have to worry about their adaptability. In no way can the pressure be explained in a few words. And this is also the most exhausting part of the job.

C: I know you have always wanted to build a South Pole museum in Hong Kong, how is it progressing?

R: This is another depressing fact. I've sent my proposal to the Ocean Park, and we have had a few formal meetings. However, I was finally given a simple letter rejecting the project because it doesn't fit "profit effectiveness". I was like an ant on a hot pan when I saw those specimens brought from the poles almost decomposed.

4



4, 5. Picking up her paintbrushes again is Rebecca's next aim in life

C: Have you tried other ways?

R: An organisation in Dalian (Liaoning Province) has already agreed to establish an exhibition hall covering the history of expeditions, scientific research and appreciation. It is expected to be open to the public by next year. There are also plans under negotiation with Beijing and Shanghai. Hong Kong people may have to go to the mainland to see these in the future. Anyway, I've already tried my best.

Opening a New Page in Life

C: It seems you have a sense of retirement. Do you have any new plans in your life?

R: Ever since I told my mother I would be a good person at the age of 10, I have been working hard. I started working at 19 years old. I worked in the daytime and studied at night. Meanwhile, I started to plan my life. I divide my life into 20-year stages. The first one was campus life; the second focused on work and family. My desire for a successful career was realised while working in the advertising profession. I've worked for lots of big organisations, which provided me with a good financial base for the next half of life. As for family, though I am divorced, I have sent two daughters to study abroad. Now I can devote myself to the third period without worries, and this is the richest stage of my life. I can't believe that I've already taken part as Art Director in nine movies, published 10 books, been eight times to the North Pole, five times to the South Pole, and five times to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. And I have visited the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon in Tibet and Taklimakan Desert in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

C: So what are you going to be busy with in the next period?

R: No need to be busy! I will pick up my brushes and paint pictures again. I have promised my teacher to relax and paint from the heart.

C: Will you totally relinquish recent scientific polar research?

R: Yes. Looking back, I've been working for other people. It's time to live for some personal happiness. I'll let others take over whenever someone is interested in the job. I will let fate arrange it for me.

(Towards the end of the interview, I thoughtlessly let Rebecca pay the bill for me. I would like to say "Thank you" to her here!)

Translated by Little Penguin

Footnote:

The interview eventually lasted two hours. Whenever our topics were related to polar areas, Rebecca became especially animated. Whenever the atmosphere became serious, I tried to start a new topic, talking about her family life and personal feelings. In fact, Rebecca has got many things in her mind which can be shared with others. However, she tends to reveal her resolute image instead of a heart full of warmth.

I recalled an impressive programme on TV recently. In one scene, a mother gave a music box which she has treasured for many years to her grown-up daughter. Inside the box are a few ornaments the mother made in her childhood. The daughter's eyes were full of tears, and she happily embraced her loving mother — Rebecca Li.

EARLY SNOW AT THE GREAT WALL

Photos & article by Xu Xiong

Last year some friends and I joined the "Bashang Scenery Photography Group" organised by *China Tourism*. It was the first time I had ever climbed the Great Wall at Jinshanling (Golden Mountain Ridge) in Beijing where the ancient structure retains its original shape, and I was profoundly impressed by it. Keen to make a special journey to photograph the Great Wall, two good friends and I finally boarded a plane in Hong Kong for Beijing on October 16, 2002, at the start of a 14-day trip to accomplish just that.

The sun, the moon, and traces of history
(The Jinshanling section of the Great Wall)
Hasselblad 40 mm wide-angle lens
f22 1/8 sec. Kodak E100VS slide

Jinshanling Great Wall in October was deep in autumn, but as the vegetation is not very dense and the colours were not as bright and beautiful as we had imagined. On the morning of October 20 after taking pictures of the sunrise at Jinshanling, we went immediately to the Mutianyu section of the Great Wall. Mutianyu has much better vegetation, so the plants provided a much greater range of colours. We were lucky to have excellent weather during our two days at Mutianyu. The desolate Great Wall covered with brambles surrounded by dazzling autumn scenery was simply splendid. Two days later, after photographing the sunrise, my two friends went back to Hong Kong, and I continued to take more pictures at Jinshanling.

Camping on the Great Wall for the Sunrise

On the 25th, I went to take pictures as planned at the highest point of Simatai—Wangjing Watchtower. This is the steepest and also the most magnificent part of the Great Wall at Jinshanling. We drove to Bagezhuang village at the foot of the mountain where the well-known Wangjing Watchtower stands. We hiked up to the top of the mountain. After two hours, the old fissured tower in need of iron and steel supports appeared before us.

It was 4:30 p.m. when we got there. The weather was not very good and it looked rather hazy. The temperature was dropping with the wind blowing harder and harder. In order to take shots of the sunrise, we had planned to stay on the Great Wall for the night and brought a lot of food with us: a bottle of spirits, two bags of dried meat, some peanuts and bread. We chatted as we ate and in no time the wine was gone. A full meal made me rather sleepy, so I got into my sleeping bag early. It was pitch black, the wind howling loudly around us. Subconsciously I felt faint raindrops falling on my face, which made me a bit worried. After a while, I suddenly remembered that I should call home. I got up to have a look at how much rain there was. My goodness! In my flashlight I saw the watchtower, my sleeping bag, camera bag and the tripod were all

The Great Wall snakes along silver ridges and mountains (The Fairy Maiden's Watchtower at Simatai)
Hasselblad 80 mm standard lens f16 1/15 sec. Kodak E100VS slide

Dawn at Jinshanling
Hasselblad 40 mm wide-angle lens f16 1/2 sec. Fuji 100 ISO negative

often carries bags for photographers and has seen them ruin good chances). I tried to keep calm to make sure every detail was right, because such a golden opportunity was rare.

I changed my lenses to different focuses as I worked and ensured the pictures were taken from a variety of perspectives and angles. When the clouds had gradually dispersed by 9 a.m., I realised I had been working on the camera for about four hours! It was time to go down the mountain. The path on the northern side of the hill was still covered with snow, so it was rather slippery. I almost fell after a few steps, so I had to crouch and slide down the hill, somewhat like skating. After a hard hike of more than four hours like this, we got back to our hotel at Jinshanling. Fine weather during the following days allowed me to take many pictures to my satisfaction.

On the 29th, I returned to Hong Kong, excited and nervous. On the aeroplane, all my experiences on this trip, sweet or bitter, flashed through my mind. Whatever results the trip might bring were secondary to the fact I had devoted myself to what I love doing and felt extremely fulfilled.

Translated by Yu Ling

covered with pure white snow. I was really thrilled. Since we had arrived in Beijing, we had been expecting snow and each day hoped to see a sea of clouds. But the locals told us it wouldn't snow until November. What good luck to have such an early snow. I guessed that if the sun came out the next morning, it would be a magnificent sight, and we might also see a sea of clouds.

Sea of Clouds Follows Night of Snow

I woke up at five in the morning and looked out of the window. Just as I expected, there was the sea of clouds. I ran out of the watchtower immediately and walked to the east. What a sight! There was a little light in the east, with strands of white cloud floating above the horizon, and a deep mass of clouds hanging heavily around the mountainside. I hastened to the spot I had chosen previously, and put up the tripod and camera, waiting anxiously for the sun to come out.

By now more people had climbed up the mountain—seven photographers, hearing it had snowed here, came overnight from Beijing and lodged at the foot of the mountain in a farmer's house. Then distant hills turned slightly pink as the sun began to rise. I became nervous somehow and my assistant kept reminding me to take it easy and shoot one by one so I didn't make any mistakes (he

Snow at Simatai Hasselblad 80 mm standard lens f22 1/15 sec. Kodak E100VS slide

The dragon half hidden in the sea of clouds (The Simatai section of the Great Wall)
Hasselblad 250 mm telephoto lens f22 1/8 sec. Fuji 100 ISO negative

TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Transportation

By Air:

Round-trip between Hong Kong and Beijing: About HK$ 2,400.

Round-trip between Shenzhen and Beijing: About HK$ 2,200.

Flights leave hourly on the average.

By Train:

A train leaves from Hong Kong at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and reaches Beijing in 27 hours.

Price: Hard sleeper	upper berth	HK$ 574
	middle berth	HK$ 587
	lower berth	HK$ 601
Soft sleeper	upper or lower berth	HK$ 934

From downtown Beijing to the Great Wall at Jinshanling

For a group of two or three people, it is better to take taxi from the airport to the intersection of Jingshun (Beijing—Shunyi) Road, which costs about 20 yuan. Then it is convenient to change to a bus from Beijing to Chengde, which will arrive at Jinshanling in two hours, charging for 20 yuan/person. If the group is big, you can discuss with a taxi driver at the airport to go directly to Jinshanling. As there are still four kilometres from the highway to the Great Wall, you will have to take a minibus which charges 10 yuan/person. The entrance fee for the Jinshanling Great Wall is 30 yuan/person.

Routes to the Wangjing Watchtower

Two Alternatives:

(1) It takes five hours to hike from the Jinshanling Hotel to the Wangjing Watchtower. Make sure that you can get to the watchtower before 4 p.m., because tourists are not allowed to climb up the mountain after 4:30 for their safety.

(2) Renting a car from the hotel to Bagezhuang Village at the foot of the mountain on which Wangjing Watchtower stands costs about 200 yuan to cover the one-hour drive. Then it takes about two hours to hike up to Wangjing Watchtower. From here, you can look down over the whole section of the Great Wall at Jinshanling. You may either walk back to the hotel along the Great Wall, or take the same path down the mountain to drive back to the Jinshanling Hotel.

From Jinshanling section to Mutianyu section of the Great Wall

It takes 1.5 hours and 260 yuan for a one-way trip from Jinshanling section to the Mutianyu Section of the Great Wall. After taking pictures at Mutianyu, you can rent a car by paying 200 yuan from Mutianyu to the airport. If you take an early flight to Beijing, you can reach Jinshanling and take pictures of the Great Wall there at sunset on the same day.

Accommodation

There is only one hotel at Jinshanling, about 160~280 yuan/day/room. You can also stay at a villager's house, for about 30 yuan/day/person. But there is no bathroom, which may be uncomfortable in summer. If you need to stay overnight on the watchtower to take pictures of sunrise and sunset, a sleeping bag and a cushion are necessary, but a tent is optional. Make sure that you have a local guide with you for the sake of safety.

Guesthouses at Mutianyu charge about the same but have better facilities. You can choose to stay either in hotel or at a villager's house.

Reminders:

(1) While taking pictures on the Great Wall, please be sure not to leave any litter after you leave.

(2) If you have heavy equipment, you can find the locals to help carry it for 80 yuan a day/person. The locals are mostly honest and reliable. The price might be a little higher at Mutianyu.

Shenzhen

3 Day Trips — Three Top Picks

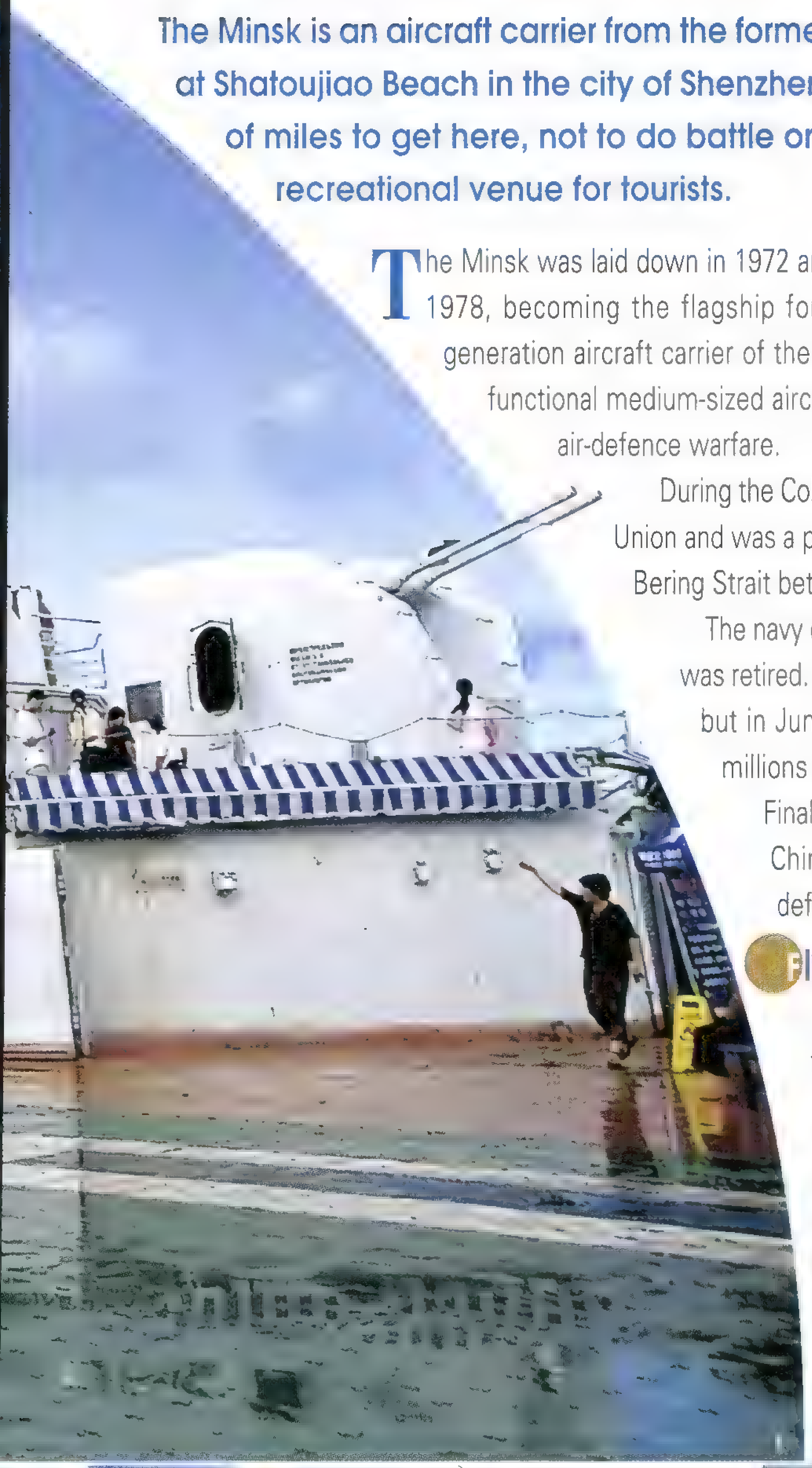
Shenzhen is a favourite weekend excursion destination for Hong Kong people. Aside from such hot spots as Dongmen and Futian, we recommend three places that will give you a fresh image of the economic zone.

Castle on the Sea

The Aircraft Carrier Minsk

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

The Minsk is an aircraft carrier from the former Soviet Union, now berthed at Shatoujiao Beach in the city of Shenzhen. It has travelled thousands of miles to get here, not to do battle on the seas but to become a recreational venue for tourists.



The Minsk was laid down in 1972 and commissioned into the Soviet navy in 1978, becoming the flagship for its Pacific fleet. A Kiev class second-generation aircraft carrier of the former Soviet Union, the Minsk is a multi-functional medium-sized aircraft carrier specialising in anti-submarine and air-defence warfare.

During the Cold War, the Minsk flew the naval flag of the Soviet Union and was a powerful name in far eastern sea areas, as far as the Bering Strait between Asia and America, and the Japan Sea.

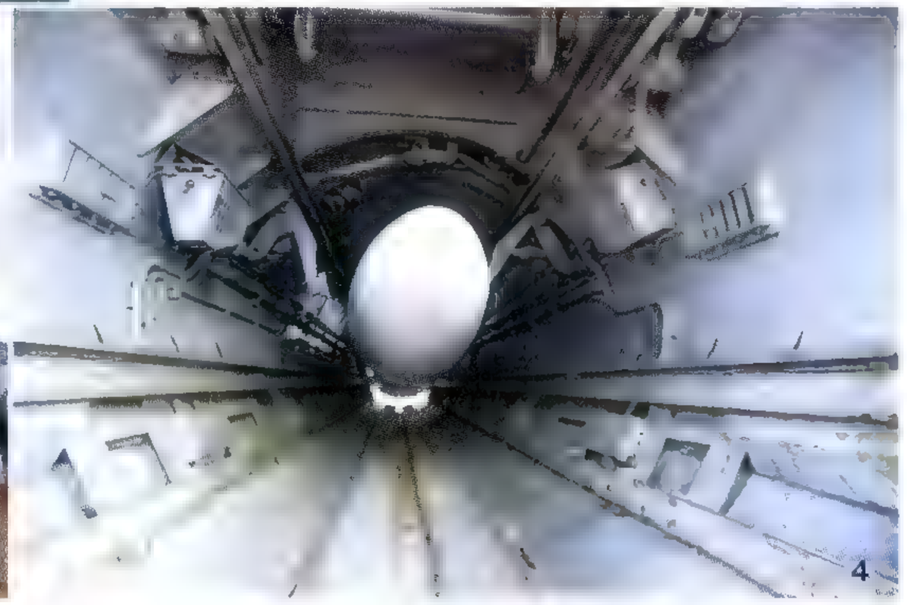
The navy changed when the Soviet Union broke up, and the Minsk was retired. In 1996 it was sold as scrap metal to the Republic of Korea, but in June 1998, was bought by the Shenzhen Minsk Aircraft Carrier Industry Co., and millions of RMB were poured into it for a total refit. It took more than two years all up. Finally on September 27, 2000, the Minsk Carrier World officially opened and became China's first aircraft carrier that combines tourism, science education and national defence education all in one.

Flight Deck as Big as Three Football Fields

Walking through Minsk Square, you'll be in no doubt that this is a military tourism area. As you pass the artillery ground, the tank ground, airforce base and the carrier planes training centre, the feeling of power is quite palpable.

Across the square, the gigantic hull of the Minsk looms majestically as if a castle on the seas.

A documentary about the Minsk was being shown as we entered the hall. Nearby was the torpedo hall revealing the mysteries of torpedoes — a powerful weapon in sea battles — with a quintuple set of torpedo tubes, including a real torpedo. The main part of the aircraft carrier is reached by climbing on deck after going through the torpedo-launching unit. At the stern,



1. The 10-storey high command tower stands tall on the flight deck
2. Looking up from below, the Minsk looks massive
3. Missile launcher aboard the ship
4. The torpedo steering on the ex-Soviet vessel

largest and most powerful. Models of the "Acura" class nuclear submarine, also the world's largest, and many other ballistic missile nuclear submarines and guided missile cruisers are also here. Further on is the Russian Space Exhibition, which exhibits the world's first satellite, the first spaceship to carry people and the first space dog. There is information about Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, the Mir space station, moon soil, various models of space rockets, space food, and all sorts of space suits and space apparatus, all in all hundreds of precious space objects from Russia.

the myriad of weaponry is a treat for military fans. It includes the nuclear warheads with a range of 550 km, SS-N-12 ship to ship missiles, SA-N-3 ship to air missiles, RBU-6000 anti-submarine missiles, SUW-N-1 anti-submarine missiles, 76 mm cannons, etc. In the bridge area there are 28 state-of-the-art radar and electronic weapons as well as a satellite navigator.

The flight deck is the size of three football fields and closely packed with fighter planes, the Mig-23 destroyer, the Mig-24 armed helicopter, and the Chinese Q-5 fighter. At the stern are large sonar systems for detecting enemy ships and submarines under the ocean.

From the flight control centre, through the flight command tower, there is a clear view of the flight deck. Here there are various sea and air battle display and control stations, airforce battle control stations, air missile display and control units, and electronic control stations that direct the take-off and landing of planes on the carrier.

The battle command centre is the heart of the Minsk. Here all the integral components of the ship such as command, communications, intelligence and control systems all come together, so being here feels like being at war. The command centre shares space with sailors' cabins, briefing rooms, magazines for 76MM shells, anchor chain storage, gym, captain's cabin, etc. The living quarters of the officers and sailors genuinely reflect the daily life, studies and leisure activities of the sailors and officers on board. There are even drawings by sailors on the walls of the passageways.

Out of the display area and through the Art Corridor, we get to the spacious hangar deck, where various types of entertainment await visitors, including the exciting time traveller and flag signal shows. The flag signal performance from the original Minsk warship has also been preserved; it is a refreshing change from the usual entertainment. On the stage, Russian-style song and dance performances bring new meaning to authentic entertainment.

Travel Tips

Transport: Bus routes 202, 208, 205, 103 will take you to the Carrier World, of which the 103 route bus departs from Luohu.

Admission: 110 yuan. 50 percent concession for senior citizens 65~70 years old; free admission for those aged over 70

Opening times: 9:30~19:00

1. Fighter planes and helicopters ranged on the flight deck
2. A Russian folk music performance
3. The first "space dog" is shown in the Russian Space Exhibition
4. A returned Soviet satellite reflects high scientific technology

Russian World Beaters on Display

The Red Navy Display is highly exciting, with pictures and models ranging from the Aurora, the "cruiser that is synonymous with the October Revolution" to the nuclear powered missile cruiser "Kirov", the world's

Searching for Shenzhen's Past

Ancient City of Dapeng

Photos & article by Zheng Ting

The old city of Dapeng was built around 1394 in the 27th year of the Ming Dynasty's Hongwu period, so is more than 600 years old. "Pengcheng", another name for Shenzhen, comes from here.

Lured by its fame, I came in search of the history of the youthful city and for a taste of life in days gone by.

By bus it takes about an hour and a half from the city centre to the south gate of the ancient city. Compared with the skyscraper-filled modern city, the Qing Dynasty residences here are full of old-world charm. If it wasn't for the notices on the walls warning about sexually transmitted diseases, a stroll along the green stone paved streets really would take you back in time, even to the Ming or Qing Dynasty.

Hometown of Famous Generals

Thanks to its people, the town is a lot livelier than other scenic areas. Apart from learning about history from the old buildings, it is also worthwhile taking a close look at how the locals live. In the Ming and Qing Dynasties the ancient city was noted for its generals. The famous General Liu Qilong who commanded the navy in the Qing Dynasty, General Lai Enjue who led the navy in battles against the British, and others all grew up in this city. These days the majority of people living here are migrant workers from Sichuan province. Apparently Hakka people used to live here too, but as they became more prosperous they moved to new houses outside the old city, leaving some of the old houses locked up and some rented out to migrant workers.

The Liu Jun family, who hail from Sichuan, live in the small room formerly used as guards' quarters at the house of General Lai Enjue. The husband is responsible for taking care of the property. Because the Lai residence is so well looked after, the furniture in the lounge room still looks splendid after hundreds of years. Three generations of the Lai family at Dapeng gave rise to five generals. No wonder they say "Yang's Family of Generals in the Song Dynasty and Lai's Family of Generals in the Qing Dynasty."

600 Years of History in Museum

Once a library for the Lai family, the Yiwen Tower now serves as the history museum for Dapeng. It has four exhibition halls in all, with over 600 years of historical records, relics and artifacts from past centuries and memorabilia of the various generals whose hometown this was.

The site near the north gate used to be the arms and artillery armoury, when the city fought against foreign invasion in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. It was converted into tne "Pengcheng School" before it was finally moved out of the old city in the 1980s. Even now you can still see the basketball hoop in the central sports oval, but nobody will be shooting baskets in it any more. The trees around the oval have become home to ducks and chicks, or clotheslines for the local inhabitants. Laundry festooning the branches makes a peculiar scene of colourful lines in the oval. On the blackboards are notices calling for residents to sort out their paperwork, so it looks like they're here to stay. Although they live in a damaged part of an historic building and their presence adds to the deterioration, they continue to live here and their smiles are friendly and kind.

A tourist like myself can hardly change things, so I take the town and its people at face value. At least their presence in Dapeng means the old city won't become empty and deserted.

1. Most old-fashioned houses have been preserved. Only the rich have built new ones
2. These villagers have added vitality in the ancient town
3. A delicate wooden chair kept in the former residence of General Lai Enjue

Travel Tips

Transport: Take bus No. 364 from Futian Bus Station or No. 360 bus from Yinhu Bus Station in Shenzhen, passing through Wutong Shan Tunnel, Dameisha, and Xiaomeisha. Transfer to a mini-bus at Dapeng Bus Station that goes to the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant and get off at Dapeng Station.

Admission: 20 yuan Tel: 755-8431 9269 Fax: 755-8431 5618

The Scent of Earth Evokes Memories

Waterlands Resort

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong

Waterlands Resort — the name alone beguiles. This newly completed scenic park, combining leisure, sightseeing, recreation and conservation, is situated on the estuary of the Pearl River in the western part of Shenzhen. It is a genuine tourist attraction with ecology and culture as its theme.

The trip to the Waterlands Resort brought back some distant memories. It was like reliving the days of working on the land when I was a youngster. While the farmland scenery before me was far more pleasant than where I once laboured, the scent of fresh earth was truly refreshing.

Along the winding waterside Jiuqu Bridge, one enters the "Shatian Jitang" pond area and is soon overwhelmed by the peaceful scenery of southern China. In quiet spots you will see dedicated anglers standing at the water's edge as if sculptured, the occasional casting of their lines creating ripples. There is the Tingfengge (Listen-to-the-Wind Court) teahouse built on the water where visitors can rest their feet, savour a cup of fragrant tea and be refreshed by a gentle sea breeze.

Dining in Paradise Like the Gods

Next to the pond is the Zuiyuelou (Enchanted Moon Tower) Restaurant on the water. Dining in such an idyllic spot, appreciating the views and the simple food, one feels as close to being a god as a mortal can get. Nearby is a farmyard so visitors can experience real farm life, watch how fresh beancurd is made at the workshop, and walk among the vines laden with melons and vegetables. Taking a deep breath will reward you with the aroma of fresh produce and fertile soil.

After crossing spacious lawns, lush and green, we come to the "Water Leisure Garden", featuring more than 10 sculptures in various designs that are also fountains spurting water. Fish swim happily in the babbling streams. Some parents are standing barefoot in the streams with their children, catching small fish

and shrimps. The delights of nature are free for all to enjoy. Getting in the mood, I also took off my shoes to paddle in the gentle stream that caressed my feet and bathed them in coolness. Looking at the small shrimps and tadpoles hurriedly avoiding our feet was like reliving the wonders of childhood.

A floating market lies on the other side of the Luhua lake, showing another aspect of farm life. The entire market is about 400 metres long and 70~80 metres wide, and crisscrossed by alleys, streets and winding waterways, with houses built close to the streets and water. All over the market quaint stores such as teahouses, tea gardens, pubs, printing houses, paper stores and fabric shops can be found. Visitors can take a canoe from the jetty to the east of the market and make their own way along the waterways, stopping when they like, bargaining with the storekeepers onshore, filling up shopping bags with interesting keepsakes, or ordering some tasty local snacks. There is even a stage on the water and tourists can enjoy performances from the boats.

The service staff said the scenery was best at dusk when the reflections of lights on the water made a shimmering nightscape. Some tourists make a night of it and stay in the old town with its quaint old-world charm.

The Ecology Museum is the theme exhibition centre at Waterlands Resort. It uses modern multi-media to illustrate the relationship between mankind and nature, evolution and the history of development, in a thoroughly entertaining way.

The square outside the Ecology Museum is an artistic delight. Its collection of sculptures in a Chinese-style garden setting perfectly embodies the farming culture of the Chinese people as well as the source of human civilization.

The resort village in the centre of Waterlands consists of a group of innovative buildings with ecology as the theme. They present mankind's oldest habitations, which visitors can either tour or stay in. The options are endless, aside from ordinary rooms, the more interesting alternatives include boathouses on the water, caves next to the water, or literally "holes in the wall" caves.

1. Multicultural song and dance performances at the Ecology Square
2. Catching eels in the river is a fun part of the park
3. A serene area for relaxing under the huge tree house
4. The water amusement area is filled with children's laughter
5. Surging shoals of fish in the pond compete for food

Travel Tips

Transport: F3 direct route: Railway Station (Luohu Bridge Reception Centre) — Waterlands Resort; F4 direct route: Huanggang Port — Waterlands Resort; 615 route: Baoan Sangu Waterlands Resort; K651 route: Longgangge — Waterlands Resort; 868 route: Longgang Station — Waterlands Resort

Admission: 60 yuan Opening times: 9:30~20:00

China's 10 Famous Skiing Resorts

Skiing is the best activity for families or lovers of winter sports to dive into a world of snow. North China has lots of places boasting a snowfall season lasting five or six months, where tourists can indulge in exciting skiing activities and delightful scenery, all at reasonable cost. In this article, we have highlighted for you 10 ski fields from Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Hebei, and Sichuan provinces.

Beijing

① Shijinglong Skiing Resort

Situated in the Yanqing State Ecosystem Demonstration Zone 80 km from Beijing, the ski field has open views and rolling landscapes. East and west of it are the scenic Longqing Gorge and Guangting Lake respectively. The 50,000-sq-m ski field can hold 3,000 people.

Add: Zhongyangfang Village, Zhangshanying Town, Yanqing County, Beijing
Tel: (10) 6919 1617/6605 4637
Website: www.sjlski.com E-mail: sjlski@sjlski.com

Facilities

- **Ski runs:** Five runs cater for elementary, medium, and advanced level skiers with a combined length of 3,000 metres. The advanced-level run is 1,000 metres long, with a drop of 137 metres and a steepest gradient of 30 degrees. The middle-level run is 800 metres long, with a drop of 135 metres and steepest gradient of 29 degrees; the elementary run is 1,000 metres long, with a drop of 14.5 metres and average gradient of 4~6 degrees.
- **Ski jump platform:** No. 3 ski run contains an 80-metre-long, 11-metre-wide ski jump, 15~20 metres high.
- **Cableways:** A total of seven cableways with a combined length of 1,776 metres, can carry 1,800 people every hour.

Transport

- The ski field can be reached by taking bus No. 919 from Deshengmen in the Beijing city area. Duration: 1.5 hours. Fare:10 yuan/ person.

Accommodation

There are two hotels near the ski resort:

- **Bank of China Hotel** The three-star hotel provides hot spring bathing. Standard twin-bed room: 400 yuan. Tel: (10) 6919 1617
- **Shengshiyuan Hotel** A two-star hotel. Standard twin-bed room: 300 yuan. Tel: (10) 6919 1617

Fees

- **Admission:** 20 yuan/ person
- **Skiing:** (Mon.~Fri.) 60 yuan/ hour, 160 yuan/ 4 hours, 260 yuan/ day; (Sat. & Sun.) 80 yuan/ hour, 220 yuan/ 4 hours, 360 yuan/ day. (Tourists who prepare skiing gear themselves can enjoy 40% discount on fees)
- **Coaching:** (Five people or less) 150 yuan/ hour; (5~10 people) 200 yuan/ hour; (10~20 people) 300 yuan/ hour

Inner Mongolia

② Fenghuang Mountain Villa Ski Field

Located in Yakeshi (Xuguit Banner), northeast of Inner Mongolia, Fenghuang (Phoenix) Mountain Villa Ski Field is close to Harbin in Heilongjiang Province. At an altitude of 600~900 metres, the 25-sq-km resort is surrounded by large plantations of pines and silver birch. The nearby forest contains numerous wild animals and plants.

Add: 8 km southeast of Yakeshi Tel: (470) 7354 892/ 7354 417
E-mail: caoyang9930@163.com

Facilities

- **Ski runs:** Natural snow to a depth of around half a metre occurs at the ski field in winter. Tourists enjoy a five-month ski season here. After the snow falls in winter, several ski runs of different lengths form naturally around the mountains, providing an ideal environment for skiers and ski athletes.
- **Others:** Tourists can also enjoy cableways, skis, horse sleighs, bobsleighing, and tyre sliding.

Transport

- More than 10 flight routes operate from Hailar Airport. It takes three hours to fly from Beijing to there, and 10 minutes to go from Yakeshi to the ski field.

Accommodation

- Surrounded by woods, islands, hills, and rivers, the **Fenghuang Mountain Villa** appears exceptionally tranquil among the striking mountain ranges. Built by the Yakeshi Lincheng Hotel and Yakeshi City Travel Administration, the villa can receive 100 guests. Public Relations Department of the Lincheng Hotel. Tel: (470) 7303 787.
- **Lincheng Hotel** ** The only two-star hotel catering for foreign guests in Yakshi, conveniently located 100 metres from the railway station.
  Standard room: 240 yuan Tel: (470) 7354 417 Fax: (470) 7354 031

Fees

- **Admission:** 15 yuan/ person
- **Skiing:** 50 yuan/ hour (including ski boots and skis)
- **Coaching:** 30 yuan/ person/ hour

Tips When skiing in the cold, dry snowy land in northern China, the skin will lose a large amount of water. Water may also be lost during the fast skiing in the wind or under long exposure of sunlight. Skiers are suggested to use oily, water-resistant skin lotion, adding with ultra-violet-resistant and water-resistant cream. The cream is only effective in short period of time, so it must be added on skin every two hours. It must also be used even in cloudy days since the ultra-violet ray is still very strong.

Heilongjiang Province

③ Longzhu Erlongshan Ski Field

Boasting fine, tranquil scenery of lakes and mountain ranges, the Erlongshan Scenic Area located 60 km east of Harbin, covers 780,000 sq m. Set among many evergreen pine trees, it is a natural ski field with deep quality snow. In late 2000, it was chosen as the training base for both the China Free Skiing Team and China Outdoor Extreme Sports by the State Skiing Association and State Mountain Climbing Association.

Add: 11 Kangshun Street, Nangang District, Harbin Tel: (451) 2340 950
Hotline of Longzhu Skiing Group: (451) 2309 722
Website: www.longzhuski.net E-mail: longzhu@longzhuski.net

Facilities:

- **Ski runs:** There are two elementary ski fields capable of accommodating several thousand skiers at the same time. There are eight runs for elementary, middle, and advanced levels, with a total length of 2,000 metres. There are also runs for sleighs or snowmobiles, a night ski field and modern snow boarding field.
- **Cableway:** One high-altitude cable car and three cableways.
- **Other activities:** Dry land bobsleighing, golfing, hill climbing, tyre sliding.

Transport

- Special buses go to the ski field from Fridays to Sundays from three hotels in Harbin: Kailai Hotel (departure time: 08:10), New World Hotel (08:30), and Singapore Hotel (09:00).

Accommodation:

- **Longzhu Guest Hotel (Guibinlou)** ***
  Facing Lake Erlong, the Longzhu VIP Tower combines the essence of architectural design and decor from East and West. The massive tower is

striking from the outside and magnificent inside

Fees (normal days/ lunar new year's eve): De Luxe Suite 1,580/ 2,300 yuan; suite 600/ 900 yuan; standard room 270/ 420 yuan; standard twin-bed room 215/ 360 yuan; share twin-bed room 140/ 140 yuan; four-bed room 220/ 370; six-bed room 290/ 470 yuan

- **Longzhu Hotel** Set beside mountains and lakes, this hotel reflects a modern European building style, in peaceful, natural surroundings.
  Fees (normal days/ lunar new year's eve, Spring Festival): 380~420/ 570~630
- **Longzhu Villa**
  A three-storey mansion in European style. The interior grounds are paved with red granite and stairs leading to every storey are built of solid wood. Guests can enjoy views of distant scenery from balconies in the rooms of the second and third storeys.
  Fees (normal days/ lunar new year's eve, Spring Festival): Mansion No. 1&2 3,600/ 4,990 yuan; Mansion No. 3 5,600/ 7,200 yuan
- **Youth Hostel** Economical. The hostel owns a fishing pool. Fees: 20~40/ bed

Fees:

- **Coaching:** (One person) 80 yuan/ 2 hours; 120 yuan/ 4 hours; 190 yuan/ day
  (2~4 people) 120 yuan/ 2 hours; 200 yuan/ 4 hours; 320 yuan/ day
  (5~8 people) 160 yuan/ 2 hours; 280 yuan/ 4 hours; 400 yuan/ day
  (9~15 people) 220 yuan/ 2 hours; 420 yuan/ 4 hours; 600 yuan/ day
  Snow board: 180 yuan/ 2 hours; 260 yuan/ 4 hours; 350 yuan/ day

④ Yabuli Ski Field

The Yabuli Ski Field, 195 km east of Harbin, is set in the Shangzhi mountains whose main peak Sanguohui rises 1,000 metres above sea level. Covering 2 sq km, it is the first of its kind in China to boast international ski field standards. The windmills within the area create sights as beautiful as any European ski fields. Under normal weather conditions, tourists can enjoy skiing from November to the following April.

Inquiry: Windmill Villa Tel: (451) 3455 088

Facilities

- **Ski runs:** There are 11 runs for elementary, middle, and advanced levels and one cross-country run, covering 30 km all up and between 10 metres and 80 metres wide. Of different lengths, the runs also have gradients ranging from one to 32 degrees. The average drop is 700 metres. On the international standard runs, the drop is almost 1,000 metres.
- **Sliding lane:** Comprising 48 turns, the so-called top of the world dry land bobsleigh run stretches 2,680 metres in length and drops 570 metres.
- **Cableway:** Three sightseeing cableways at the Activities Centre, Lake Tianyin and Sanguohui total 4,230 metres and can carry 1,500 people per hour. The 1,606-metre Sanguohui cableway drops 570 metres at an average gradient of 18 degrees.
- **Skiing gear stores:** Stores at the Activities Centre and Twin Bridge Cableway Station provide nearly 800 sets of skiing gear for standard or advanced levels.
- **Others:** Children's Skiing Entertainment Zone, Lake Tianyin Ski Field, Windmill Ski Zone, fishing ground, horse riding ground, target-shooting ground, etc.

Transport

- Buses leave for the Windmill Villa at the Yabuli Ski Field every day from the Harbin Longyun Passenger Transport Terminus. Tel: (451) 3634 528. Duration: 3 hours.
- Trains run frequently between Harbin and Yabuli. Duration: 4 hours. Get off in Yabuli Town and take a 15-minute bus ride directly to the ski field.

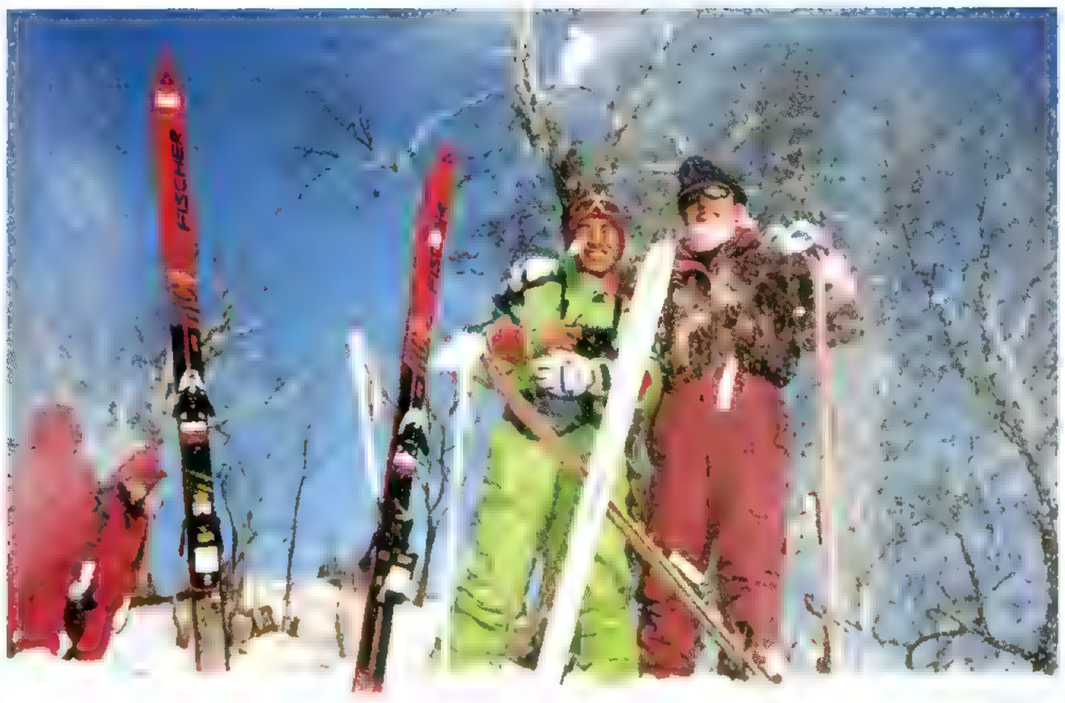
Accommodation

- **Windmill Villa**
  Set in a mountain valley, the villa is reminiscent of classic 16th century windmills.
  Fees: Rates start from 2,000 yuan for booking one mansion with the highest rate at 9,800 yuan
- **Ice Asian Games Village Hotel**
  There are 80-plus luxury guestrooms with fireplace. Fees: Standard room from 430 yuan

Booking hotline: (451) 3455 088 Fax: (451) 3455 138 Internet booking: www.skiyabuli.com

Fees:

- **Ski gear** (normal days/ weekends/ festivals): 100/ 110/ 130 yuan per 2 hours; 200/ 220/ 260 yuan per half day; 330/ 380/ 430 yuan per day
- **Coaching (normal days/ weekends/ festivals):**
  Fees per two hours: (One person) 170/ 200/ 280 yuan; (two people) 120/ 150/ 180 yuan; (three people) 100/ 120/ 160 yuan
  Fees per half day: (One person) 220/ 280/ 340 yuan; (two people) 150/ 180/ 260 yuan; (three people) 120/ 160/ 200 yuan
  Fees per day: (One person) 340/ 400/ 480 yuan; (two people) 220/ 260/ 300 yuan; (three people) 170/ 200/ 240 yuan



Jilin Province

⑤ Beidahu Ski Field

Located in the Lake Songhua Nature Reserve in the extensive Changbai mountain ranges, the ski field occupies 300,000 sq m. Nine peaks within the reserve are over 1,200 metres above sea level, with the highest 1,404 metres. Thanks to its northern warm continental climate and geographic position surrounded by mountains on three sides, the ski field boasts low wind speed even during winter, an advantage in preserving accumulated snow. The snow season lasts from November to the following April.

Add: 56 km from the city area in Lihe Town, Yongji County, Jilin

Inquiry: Jilin Provincial Tourism Bureau Tel: (431) 8906 818

Facilities

- **Ski runs:** There are six mountain ski runs altogether, with a total length of 8,040 metres and gradients between 4~32 degrees. The No. 1 run is available for night skiing. Crisscrossing each other, the runs are suitable for elementary, middle and advanced learners, as well as adventure skiers. An interesting 10-km cross-country run with regular ups and downs goes through a forest. Another run winding down a mountainside offers tourists a brand-new skiing experience. Tourists can also enjoy speed skiing on a rail ski run that extends for 1,200 metres.
- **Ski jump:** At heights of 20, 50, or 90 metres for international competitions.
- **Cableway:** Every high mountain ski run is accompanied by an automatic cableway from the American Staik Company. Each can carry 3,300 people per hour, and tourists can get off at the stop-overs. There is also a 300-metre ski-tow for beginners .

Transport

- Take a bus to the ski field from the Jilin Highway Passenger Transport Centre. There are five buses every day. Fare: 20 yuan. Duration: 1.5 hours. Or go by taxi directly from Jilin to the ski field. Fare: 100 yuan (except public holidays).

Accommodation

- **Athletes Village** Three-room suite 888 yuan; two-room suite 618 yuan; standard room 180 yuan/ person; single-bed room 260 yuan; three-bed room 110 yuan/ person; four-bed room 110 yuan/ person; five-bed room 90 yuan/ person

Fees

- **Ski gear:** Normal 80 yuan/ day; advanced 180 yuan/ day
- **Cableway:** Ski lift 100 yuan/ day; ski-tow free of charge

⑥ Lake Songhua Ski Field

This ski field on Mt. Daqing beside Lake Songhua is nestled amid mountains and enjoys high quality snow.

Covering 350,000 sq m, the Lake Songhua Ski Field owns 2,700 metres of runs, a 5-km cross-country ski run, a 50-metre ski jump, and a 1,800-metre cableway. At the Snow Funland, a grand tourist ski club, are a 2,100-metre-long, 30-metre-wide run for beginners and intermediate learners, a cable tram which can carry 30 people per minute, colourful sleigh runs, cafe, rest rooms, hotels and other stores.

Apart from the fun of skiing, tourists can also appreciate Jilin's famous hoarfrost. In the winter season, when the Songhua River flows through a reservoir, the water warms and evaporates. When it meets the cold air, especially at night, the water vapour condenses on tree branches. In the morning, all the trees have turned silvery white, creating an irresistible wonderland.

During the Spring Festival month, the ski field becomes a festive place where ice lantern shows and other ice and snow sports are held.

Tips Skiing lanes in China's skiing resorts are mainly formed by snow of powder form, shell form, icy form, and semi-liquid form. In the morning, the snow is usually in icy form which is covered by a thin layer of ice. Since icy form snow has little friction with skis, the skiing speed will be very fast even the skis are not polished. It requires the skiers to have higher skiing skills. After 10 a.m. when its surface is slowly melted by sunlight, the snow appears in powder form, which is more comfortable and suitable for common skiers.

⑦ Mt. Changbai Highland Ice & Snow Sports Training Base

Deep in the Mt. Changbai ranges, the resort is a comprehensive base comprising ski training and winter sports, at international competition standards which is rare in China. Lying at 1,640~1,820 metres above sea level, the base covers 120,000 sq m, with average temperatures between 15~25°C all year round. The winter season in Jilin runs from October to early May.

Add: Northern slope station of Mt. Changbai

Inquiry: Mt. Changbai Travel Net (www.changbainet.com)

Tel: (433) 5710 800 E-mail: changbainet@163.net

Facilities

- **Runs:** A 600-metre ski run 50~60 metres wide starts at an altitude of 2,000 metres and ends at 1,710 metres, with a gradient of 20 degrees. It can be used for highland skiing training. A free ski field at 1,720 metres above sea level is located near the end of the resort. A 40-metre ski jump stands between the highland and cross-country ski fields. West of the Athletes Village Hotel is a ski field especially for beginners some 200 metres long by 30 metres wide.
- **Cableway:** There are two 400-metre cableways equipped with single-seat hanging lifts

Transport

All routes go via Erdaobaihe, the closest town to Mt. Changbai:

- Take a train from Tumen to Changchun. e.g. Train K675 departs at 21:00, arriving Antu next morning. Take a bus to Erdaobaihe Town, then hire a car or take a taxi to Mt. Changbai.
- Or take train K953 which departs at 14:00 from Changchun and arrives at Baihe Station (in Erdaobaihe Town) at 05:53. Hire a vehicle to Mt. Changbai. Duration: 1 hour.
- Or hire a car from Yanji to Mt. Changbai. Duration: 4 hours.

(When the snow is deep, road travel may become difficult and the journey will take much longer)

Accommodation

- **Athletes Village Hotel**

  This is a subsidiary hotel of the Training Base, which is convenient for ice and snow sports.

  Fees: Standard twin-bed room 400 yuan; three-bed room 500 yuan; suite 600 yuan; Presidential Suite 800 yuan.

Fees

- **Coaching:** 60 yuan/ hour; 100 yuan/ two hours (5 people or below)
- **Snowland cart** (5 people or below): Athletes Village — Hot Springs Waterfall 500 yuan/ time; Athletes Village Hotel — viewing platform 900 yuan/ time. Tourists can stay at the destinations for 30 minutes, or pay 100 yuan for an extra 30 minutes, etc.

Hebei Province

⑧ Saibei Ski Resort

This resort covers 10 sq km on the northern slopes of Xiqueliang Peak, which rises 1,600~2,000 metres above sea level in Zhangjiakou. It lies on uplands between the North China Plateau and Inner Mongolian Highlands, with a forest cover of 40 percent. The resort is set among wide-open landscapes and beautiful natural vegetation. The snow season starts in November when the warm air in Hebei meets with the cold air from Inner Mongolia.

Add: Xiqueliang, Chongli County, Hebei Tel: (313) 4772 012/ 4772 053

Beijing Office: Rm 403, Weitu Bldg, 3 Longtan Rd Bing, Chongwen Dist., Beijing

Hotline: (10) 6711 2847/ 6712 9785 Chinese website: www.saibeiski.com

Facilities

- **Ski runs:** There are 10 runs for beginner, medium, and advanced levels, covering 7,000 metres all up. One that is 3,000 metres long can hold 1,000 skiers. Some runs can be used for racing or training top skiers in summer or winter.
- **Others:** The ski field has also imported over 1,000 sets of skiing gear for adults and several hundred for children. There are four cableways, sleighs, snowmobiles, and tracked vehicles, etc.

Transport

- The ski field is 268 km away from the Madian Qiao in Beijing. From Madian Qiao head for Zhangjiakou along the Beijing-Zhangjiakou Expressway. After passing Dajingmen, drive 3 km towards Chongli County and turn right. One reaches the ski field after passing Mazhangzi. The whole trip takes about three hours. The asphalt road is flat and safe for driving.
- Take a special route bus from the Beijing Chongwen District Longtan Lake Beijing Amaze Park or Zhangjiakou Railway Station. Or take one of the luxury buses plying from Beijing to the ski field. Fare: 120 yuan/ person; standard bus 100 yuan; or back and forth from Zhangjiakou to the ski field. Fare for luxury bus/ small vehicle 60 yuan/ person; standard bus 40 yuan.

Accommodation

- **White Birch Villa** Twin-bed room 100 yuan/ bed, three-bed room 50 yuan/ bed, farmhouse room with fireplace 60 yuan/ person (public washroom)
- **Snowman Hotel** Standard room 150 yuan/ bed; suite 680 yuan; luxury suite 1,880 yuan
- **Mansion** 150 yuan/ bed; suite 200 yuan/ bed
- **Linhai Xue She** Suite 980 yuan

* **Tent:** 150 yuan/ day

Fees

* **Admission:** 20 yuan/ person
* **Skiing** (including cableway fees): Full set ski gear 60 yuan/ hour; 110 yuan/ 2 hours; 150 yuan/ half day; 300 yuan/ day (free of charge for night skiing)
* **Coaching:** Advanced-level coach 150 yuan/ hour; professional coach 100 yuan/ hour; beginners coach 50 yuan/ hour

⑨ Mulan Hunting Ground Ski Resort

Also known as Saihanba Ski Field, the resort is located in the Saihanba State Forest Park in Chengde, Hebei Province. It covers 160,000 sq m at 1,600 metres above sea level. Once the training base for the Eight Banners winter war in the Qing Dynasty, the ski field is set among China's largest artificial forest belt. The place is much favoured by hunters and skiers.

Add: Inside Saihanba State Forest Park, Mulan Hunting Ground, Chengde
Tel: (314) 7802 222

Facilities

* **Ski runs:** International standard runs pass naturally through the forest at elevations of 700, 1,000, and 1,500 metres, suiting elementary, medium and advanced skiers.
* **Others:** Free skiing in the woods, mountain climbing, horse riding, hunting, target-shooting, snowmobiles, horse/dog-sleighs, bobsleighing, tyre sliding.

Transport

* For the 350-km trip from Beijing, take train No. 2599 or K275 from Beijing South Railway Station to Siheyong Station. Then hire a car to the ski field. Duration: 3.5 hours. Fare: 200~400 yuan (depends on type of vehicle and number of people).

Accommodation

Mulan Hotel, **Qitong Hotel**, **Honglou Hotel**, and **Saihanba Hotel** are within the Saihanba Scenic Area. Standard room 70 yuan/ bed; common room 60 yuan/ bed; wooden hut or yurt 20 yuan/ bed; local people's houses 20 yuan/ person

Fees

* **Activities:** Skiing 60 yuan/ hour; horse-sleigh 30 yuan/ time; snowmobile 30 yuan/ time; horse riding 30 yuan/ hour
* **Dining:** Breakfast 5~10 yuan/ person; lunch 20~25 yuan/ person (10 dishes, one soup); meat to eat by hand 60~80 yuan/ tray; roasted whole lamb 600~700 yuan; campfire night show 200 yuan

Sichuan Province

⑩ Xiling Ski Field

Situated in Dayi County, west of Chengdu, the ski field covers seven square km at an altitude of 2,200 metres above sea level. The mountain within the area stands 5, 364 metres above sea level and is snowcapped all year round. The snow season lasts from December to late March next year, and snow may accumulate to a depth of 60 cm.

Add: Xiling Town, Dayi County, Chengdu
Tel: (28) 8830 2010 Service hotline: (28) 8830 2036

Facilities

* **Ski runs:** A total of 10 international standard ski runs can hold 2,000 skiers. The ski field has imported 35 snowmobiles from Canada and Japan, as well as other equipment such as snake-shaped sleighs, toboggans, and bobsleighs from Europe.
* **Cableway:** The ski resort and Riyueping (Sun Moon Ground), the main scenic area of Mt Xiling, are connected by a 2,500-metre-long sight-seeing cable car.
* **Gear:** The ski field owns 2,000 sets of ski gear made by world famous brands. In addition, there are two hot-air balloons and 10 paragliding canopies.

Transport

* Tourists can take special route buses from the Chengdu Xinnanmen (New South Gate) Terminus or Jinsha Terminus to Dayi. Change to another bus to the entrance to Mt. Xiling. Reach the ski field by taking a traffic cableway (2, 300 metres long, climbing 800-plus metres) for about 12 minutes. It is faster to drive on the highway leading from Dujiangyan to Dayi to the snow-capped mountain.

Accommodation

* **Sunshine Holiday Inn**
  The hotel provides banquet halls, a nightclub, conference rooms, and business centres. Tel: (28) 8830 2099
* **Azaleas Holiday Inn**
  Designed in European style with luxurious decor. Tel: (28) 8830 2225
* **Snow Flakes Sports Club**
  The restaurant inside provides dishes of wild game and fresh seafood. Tel: (28) 8830 2222
* **Fengye Hotel (main building and three mansions)** Tel: (28) 8830 2228

Fees

* **Admission:** Ski field 80 yuan; Mt. Xiling 20 yuan
* **Traffic cableway:** 50 yuan (return)
* **Sightseeing cableway:** 80 yuan (return)
* **Skiing:** 100 yuan/ 2 hours

Tips When people are too concentrated or expose under sunlight in reflective snowy land for a long time, they may lose sight temporarily, which is known as snow blindness. In the beginning, the eyes may become sensitive, blink repeatedly and look sideways. Later, they may see things with a pink colour which grows deeper, and start to feel pain. To cure this, go to darker places, close the eyes, and place a cool wet cloth on the forehead to lower the high temperature.

Inter-island Merry-go-round

Photos & article by Tony Henderson

Visitors to Hong Kong can take a ferry trip around the outlying islands and step ashore on Peng Chau, Lantau and Cheung Chau islands all in one day. The regular inter-island ferry makes a brief stopover at each port-of-call every two hours or short time. To start, Peng Chau is an optimal choice.

Peng Chau is an island of commuters and a secluded community of "locals" who continue to fish and farm and hold festivals throughout the year that bring cultural colour to brighten everyone's otherwise humdrum lives. The festivities and celebrations are held under the eye of the guardians of the old ways, with no input from the modern government which disdains to officially sit with the village chief, the Rural Committee chairman, the clansmen and landlords.

Before the 1960s this small U-shaped islet was a prosperous fishing port, but was later transformed into an industrial site. The industries have since left and now only a few thousand residents remain.

To the north of Peng Chau rises the arch of the Tsing Ma Bridge – an impressive engineering project serving Chek Lap Kok International Airport. The urban proliferation of Discovery Bay with its MacDonalds, high-rises and fast ferries, is also a backdrop for Peng Chau.

If you see more non-Chinese than you might have expected on Peng Chau, don't assume they are locals. Very likely the families you see have popped over from Discovery Bay. Peng Chau is the least changing of all of these outlying islands and is largely the equivalent of a dormitory town. However, its alleyways are fun to get lost in, have snacks in, buy trinkets in and watch the locals at their daily chores.

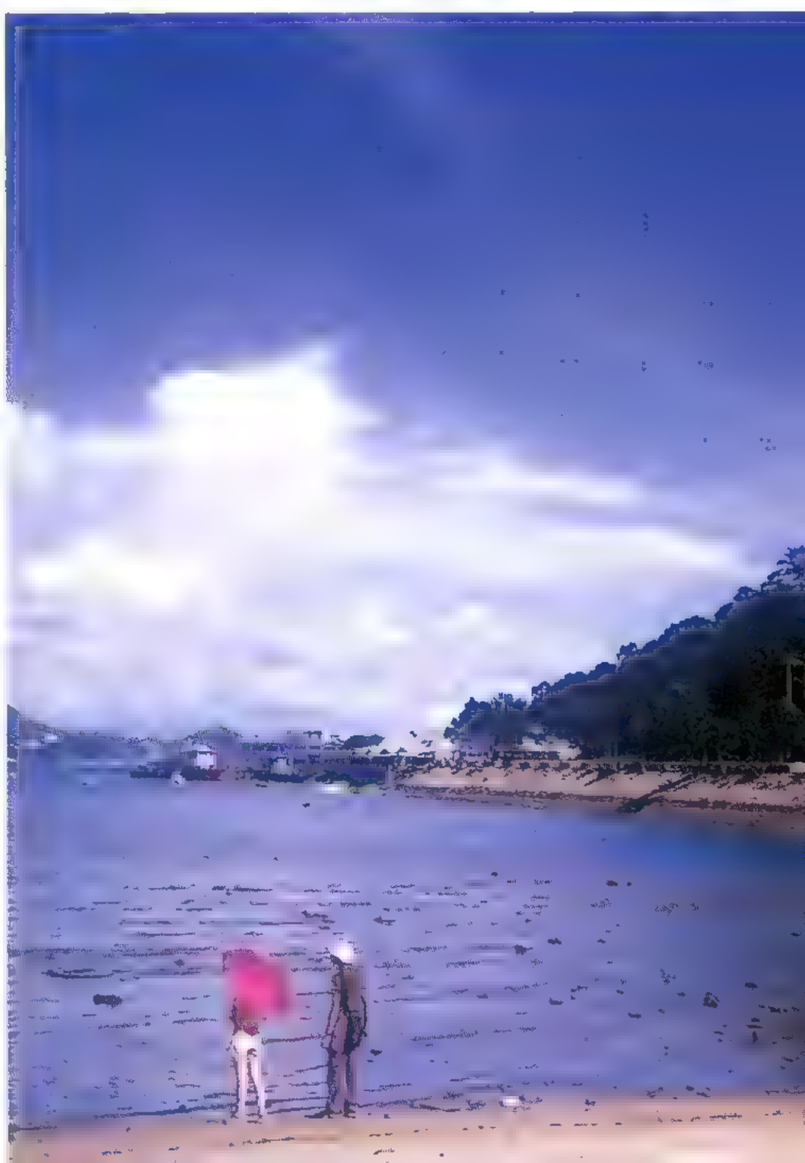
Look out for the Peng Chau map published by activist Ms. Li Fong of the Green Peng Chau Association, that gives plenty of ideas for places to visit and which restaurants serve what. If you want an English pint then try the Forest Bar, it has a dartboard, Scrabble for the young ones and English-style bar food. From the rear seating area there is a good view of the ever busy harbour. Or there is the neighbouring Sea Breeze restaurant with similar provisions.

Next stop on the ferry is Silvermine Bay or Mui Wo as the locals call this once sleepy Lantau Island village. This is the stop for the Big Buddha at Ngong Ping, although the China Bear pub with its unbeatable view of distant Hong Kong seems to be a more important destination these days. Don't try to do the inter-island hop and Big Buddha all in one day though. For a quieter pint try the Hippo bar where patrons enjoy trying to lighten publican Roger's day.

If there is time for a dip in the sea then stroll down to the beach and walk along the shore until you encounter a safe swimming boom line. If you want a barbecue and have purchased the goods, then Segoo's shop on the seafront by the first lifeguard lookout post will provide the rest, and a table. Or there is an adjacent barbecue area with all facilities. Provisions can be bought in the village behind the Silvermine Beach Hotel.

Bikes can be hired for casual excursions into the foothills, maybe to see the Silver Mine itself up by the waterfall through Pak Ngan Heung village. There are plenty of signposts. The old village is best seen in the early hours of the morning when it comes to life. The rest of the day the empty roads are the domain of sleeping dogs.

The next leg of this circular journey takes you to Cheung Chau, via Chi Ma Wan, another small port of call on Lantau, so don't get off yet! Of course the more adventurous visitor



can walk to Chi Ma Wan from the Mui Wo ferry pier by following the coast in the direction of the helicopter pad. It takes two hours. Then board the ferry for the final leg to Cheung Chau.

From the ferry, the flying-through-the-sea jetfoils bound for Macao make a fine sight as you reach the straits between Lantau, the biggest island of all including Hong Kong Island, and the really tiny Cheung Chau island. Despite its small size the latter has the biggest population of all the outlying islands-apart from Lantau's Discovery Bay whose urban sprawl doesn't qualify.

Every tourist to Cheung Chau mustn't miss Cheung Po Tsai (a famous pirate) Cave. This is best approached via Sai Wan village by a sanpan boat that takes five minutes and costs about HK$5 per person, depending on the weather, day or mood of the owner. At the cave entrance a bevy of urchins offers torches at another HK$5 – a must unless you happen to have your own. The cave is short but dark. Small children can manage but must be lowered down for the experience!

Cheung Chau means seafood at its best – there is always Lamma Island but that is not on this inter-island route. Not cheap but absolutely fresh. Pick your live fish at the door of the restaurant or anywhere along the quayside and have it cooked. There are the usual crabs, prawns, lobster and shellfish.

Bike hire on Cheung Chau is a good idea because these days the cycle paths go from one end of the island all the way through the town to the other end and right along Tun Wan beach that faces Hong Kong.

My favourite beach section is Kwun Yam Wan at the far end past the Wind Surfing Centre still managed by Lai Gun who trained Hong Kong's famous wind surfing Olympic gold medal champion, San San Lee, his relative.

When the day is over and it's time to return to the big city you can jump aboard a fast ferry from Cheung Chau and in half an hour you are back among the city sights, smells and sounds. In no time at all you will be revived with lots of great memories of a different side of Hong Kong.

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How to Enjoy Cheap & Roaming Service

Photos by Xie Guanghui
Article by Shi Jun, Chu Kit

A mobile phone is very handy for a traveller to keep in touch with family or friends any time during a trip. But expensive service charges and access fees are a big headache...

1. How to avoid the high roaming charge?

"Call Forward" and "Redial Automatic Roaming" services have become very popular in Hong Kong in recent years. Both are less expensive than ordinary automatic roaming. To enjoy the call forward service, you have to register a call forward number at a call forward service provider or communication service provider in Hong Kong. In addition, you must have a mainland mobile phone number. The easiest way is to buy a SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) card (such as Shen Zhou Xing 神州行 or Ru Yi Tong 如意通) which can be added value on the mainland.

Before you cross the border, dial your call forward number and you will get your phone number in Hong Kong connected to your mainland phone number. Then insert your SIM card in your mobile phone. Then any calls to your Hong Kong phone number will be diverted to your phone number on the mainland. If you receive a call from or ring up anyone on the mainland, you simply pay a user fee at local service charge rates. When you return to Hong Kong, you just replace the SIM card and terminate the call forward service. But you should make a careful comparison between different companies before accepting any plan since their charges may vary.

"Redial Automatic Roaming" is an old roaming service. First register with the service in Hong Kong. When you make a call on the mainland, you have to dial a series of designated numbers first, and then the telephone number you want to call in Hong Kong or overseas. After a while, you will receive a call from the service operator to confirm before putting you through. Remember the rates for this service within or outside Guangdong Province are different. If the line is busy or unanswered, you still have to pay for the service.

2. Applying for a number on the Mainland?

If you don't want to spend any money on roaming service, you may simply choose to apply for a number with a telecommunication operator on the mainland. The two most famous telecommunication companies in China are China Mobile and China Unicom. Both have their own communication networks. The monthly fees of China Mobile are slightly higher, at about RMB 30/ month. Another alternative is to buy a "Quan Qiu Tong" (全球通) card, which connects you to Hong Kong and anywhere in the world. It is much cheaper than the automatic roaming service in Hong Kong. However, a person must have a local ID to apply for the services. Thus you may have to ask help from your relatives or friends on the mainland.

Convenient on the Mainland?

3. What are the advantages of using mainland SIM cards?

The mainland SIM cards, such as "Shen Zhou Xing" and "Ru Yi Tong", can connect you to anywhere on the mainland as well as directly to Hong Kong. Having paid for the reasonable initial "entry fee", you only need to pay a usage fee afterwards, no monthly fee or other service charge. In addition, the number given to you may be used again for your next trip to the mainland. Once the value is used up, the service stops. Or you may continue the service by using a value-injected card.

However, once you have left the province where you bought the card, you have to pay roaming charges again when you make a call.

If you use a "Ru Yi Tong" card, try to buy adequate value-injected cards in the place you have subscribed, as it will be impossible to add value in other provinces. The "Shen Zhou Xing" card does not have such a problem. Besides, it has a wider network coverage than "Ru Yi Tong" card.

4. How to use the IP Service?

When you make a long-distance call by using a "Shen Zhou Xing" card, you may use the cheaper IP service — to dial "17951" before dialing the phone number. If you want to make the call through a telephone, dial "17909". In this way, you save half of the normal costs.

5. How to use an IC card?

In case you did not bring a mobile phone with you to the mainland, you may buy an IC card that can be used at any public phone booth anywhere in cities and towns and is able to make calls to home or abroad. Sometimes you will be given a little more value as an incentive gift. For instance, you may get a 30-yuan IC card by purchasing 25 yuan. But always bear in mind the valid period of the card.

March

19/12~18/3

The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the homeland of China's northern nations, has an ancient history of the renowned horse-riding culture. Now tourists can get more understanding of the origins of this culture through the **exhibitions of Dinosaurs from Inner Mongolia** and **Nomadic Culture of Genghis Khan and Ancient China** held in the Macao Tower Convention & Entertainment Centre. The exhibition comprises approximately 120 pieces of cultural relics ranging from the Neolithic Age to the Ming and Qing dynasties.

4~7/ 3

Finished jewellery for all sectors of the market can take on the glow of success at the **Hong Kong International Jewellery Show 2003**, a leading and the most comprehensive fair of its kind in Asia. Besides the wonderful array of pearls and gems, other marvelous programmes include the **4th Hong Kong Jewellery Design Competition** and **2003 International South Sea Pearl Jewellery Design Competition**, pearl auctions, seminars, and Designer Jewellery Galleria. The inaugural **Watch & Clock Pavilion** will also be proudly presented.

Early Feb ~ Early March

The Zigong Lantern Fair held in Zigong City, Sichuan Province, has a long history, dating back to the Tang and Song dynasties. "Dragons" made of porcelain dinner sets, "peacocks" made of glass bottles, and bamboo, silk and paper lanterns will also be on display, integrating beautiful shapes, bright colours light, movement and sound and displaying a high degree of workmanship. Moreover, various commodity exhibitions and trade fairs will feast tourists' eyes.

Jan ~ March

A marvellous series of festivals will carry on amazing every tourist in the territory, including the **Hong Kong Arts Festival** (Feb 14~Mar 9), **Spring Lantern Carnivals** (Jan 25~Mar 3), **Birthday of Hung Shing Kung** (Mar 15), and **Birthday of Koon Yam** (Mar 21). The admissions, except those of the Arts Festival, for most events are free! Enquiry of the Arts Festival: Hong Kong Arts Festival Society. Ltd; Tel: (852) 2824 3555; Fax: (852) 2845 2284/ 2824 3798; E-mail: afgen@hkaf.org.

Venues: Fanling Sports Ground, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Ko Shan Road Park, Ko Shan Theatre, Tsing Yi Park

21~27/ 2

The First Hong Kong International Wushu Festival is to promote and disseminate Chinese "wushu" (martial arts), to facilitate international cultural exchanges, and to strengthen the friendship among Chinese "wushu" lovers all over the world. The event is sponsored by the Chinese Wushu (Overseas) Training Institute, and supported by the Hong Kong Wushu League, the Jingwu Sports Association, and the Hong Kong Shatin Sports Association. There will be performances of well-known local and overseas "wushu" masters. The committee will evaluate the "wushu" award thesis paper by post or through the Internet. Interested parties can visit the website: www.2003ws.com/

23/ 3

Highlights of the city in this spring will be the **Derby Hong Kong 2003** (HK Group 1) held on Sunday, March 23, in the Sha Tin Racecourse. The first winner will be granted a prize as high as HK$ 8,120,000. The **Centenary Sprint Cup** (Second leg of the Champion Sprint Series) (HK Group 1) will also be hosted on the same day. First winner will be given a prize of HK$2,565,000. To obtain more details, visit the website of the Hong Kong Jockey Club: www.jockeyclub.org.hk/

15~23/ 3

Organised by Kaohsiung County Government, the **Sung Chiang Battle Array** held in Tzuchu Temple Plaza is a kind of temple folk art performance that is practiced in Neimen in southern Taiwan. The array was originated in the Qing Dynasty, when local people of Neimen organised self-defense teams since the government was powerless to stop bandits from ravaging the mountain areas around Neimen and robbing the locals' possessions. The event is combined by an opening ceremony, folk battle array performances, local agricultural productions exhibition, master chef's food tasting, historical artifacts exhibit, and procession of ancient artifacts.

Hotels in Shaanxi

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel	Fax
Ankang	Dianli Hotel Ankang	**	19 Daqiao Rd S, Ankang	(915) 3211118	(915) 3211118
Baoji	Baojiduke Hotel	***	1 Dongfeng Rd, Baoji	(917) 3219777	(917) 3219788
	Phoenix Hotel Baoji	***	10 Jiangtan Rd, Baoji	(917) 3398900	
	Xifeng Hotel Baoji	***	Mid-sect. of Sports Rd, Baoji	(917) 3217621	(917) 3213912
	Fenghuang Hotel	*	6 Chengnan St, Fengxiang, Baoji	(917) 3398900	
Hanzhong	Hanyuan Hotel	**	20 Hanzhong Rd, Hanzhong	(916) 2214911	(916) 2212229
	Nanhu Hotel Hanzhong	**	Nanhu Scenic Spots, Hanzhong	(916) 5512486	(916) 5512117
Xi'an	Hyatt Regency Xi'an	*****	158 Dongda St, Xi'an	(29) 7231234	(29) 7216799
	Grand Castle Hotel	*****	12 West Sect. of Huangcheng Rd N, Xi'an	(29) 7231800	(29) 7231500
	Sheraton Xi'an	*****	12 Fenggao Rd, Xi'an	(29) 4261888	(29) 4262188
	Shangri-La Golden Flower Hotel	*****	8 Changle Rd W, Xi'an	(29) 3232981	(29) 3235477
	Hotel Royal	****	334 Dongda St, Xi'an	(29) 7235311	(29) 7235887
	Grand New World Hotel	****	48 Lianhu Rd, Xi'an	(29) 7216868	(29) 7219754
	Garden Hotel Tang Hua	****	4 Dongyanyin Rd, Big Goose Pagoda, Xi'an	(29) 5261111	(29) 5261778
	Bell Tower Hotel	***	Southwest corner of Bell Tower, Xi'an	(29) 7279200	(29) 7218767
	Xi'an Hotel	***	26 North Sect. of Chang'an Rd, Xi'an	(29) 5261351	(29) 5261759
	Empress Hotel	***	45 Xingqing Rd, Xi'an	(29) 3232999	(29) 3236988
	Sino Pearl Hotel	***	8 South Sect. of Huancheng Rd E, Xi'an	(29) 3233888	(29) 3235962
	Jianguo Hotel	***	20 Jinhua Rd N, Xi'an	(29) 3238888	(29) 3235145
	Jiefang Hotel	**	181 Jiefang Rd, Xi'an	(29) 7423829	(29) 7422617
Xianyang	Rainbow Hotel Xianyang	***	1 Caihong Rd, Xianyang	(910) 3313472	(910) 3313456
	Qinbao Hotel Xianyang	***	60A Weiyang Rd W, Xianyang	(910) 3313388	(910) 3313368
Yulin Prefecture	Yulin Hotel	**	4 Hubin Rd S, Yulin	(912) 3282968	
	Shenmu Hotel	**	Tuofeng Rd, Shenmu County, Yulin	(912) 8312307	
	Dingbian County Hotel Yulin	*	Dongzheng St, Dingbian County, Yulin	(912) 4221141	

Flights to and from Xi'an

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Ankang — Xi'an	1 2 4 6	1515	1600	2Z 212
Xi'an — Ankang	1 2 4 6	1405	1445	2Z 211
Baotou — Xi'an	2 4 6	1240	1350	2Z 182
	1 5	1740	1920	2Z 162
Xi'an — Baotou	2 4 6	1100	1210	2Z 181
	1 5	1500	1710	2Z 161
Changsha — Xi'an	1	1600	1735	WH2508
	2 4 6	1605	1735	WH2386
	2 5	1640	1835	XO9382
	2 4 6	1825	2005	WH2322
	1 3 5	1830	2010	2Z 328
	1 7	1940	2100	WH2328
Xi'an — Changsha	1	0905	1035	WH2507
	2 4 6	0905	1045	WH2385
	2 5	1345	1550	XO9381
	2 4 6	1605	1740	WH2321
	1 3 5	1620	1755	2Z 327
	1 7	1710	1840	WH2327
Chengdu — Xi'an	2 4 7	0715	0815	SZ4531
	1 5	0725	0835	SZ4203
	1 4 5	0815	0915	3U 201
	1 3 5 7	1045	1240	2Z 408
	1 3 5	1045	1255	2Z 410
	4 7	1050	1150	WH2412
	2	1150	1345	SC 488
	7	1235	1345	SC 488
	2 6	1245	1340	SZ4609
	1 4 6	1250	1415	CA1422
	3 6	1305	1410	MU5438
	2 5	1320	1430	CJ6424
	3	1455	1615	CA1422
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1520	1625	CJ6402
	3 6	1600	1700	3U 203
	6	1640	1800	CJ6422
	3	1750	1910	CJ6422
	2 7	1800	1910	XW 238
	1 2 3 5 6	2100	2200	WH2402
Xi'an — Chengdu	7	1055	1150	SC 487
	6	1120	1220	CJ6421
	2 5	1120	1230	CJ6423
	3	1220	1340	CJ6421
	3	1230	1410	CA1421
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1255	1420	CJ6401
	1 4 5	1340	1440	3U 202
	2 7	1540	1655	XW 237
	3 6	1740	1845	3U 204
	1 2 3 5 6	1900	2010	WH2401
	3 7	1930	2040	SZ4204
	1 3 5	2000	2110	SZ4532
	2 6	2050	2150	SZ4610
Dalian — Xi'an	6	0815	1030	CJ6421
	2 5	0815	1030	CJ6423
	3	0930	1135	CJ6421
	3 7	1310	1540	WH2608
	1 4	1625	1835	XO9604
	4	1800	2000	CJ6433
Xi'an — Dalian	3 7	0955	1230	WH2607
	1 4	1315	1530	XO9603
	2 5	1520	1710	CJ6424
	6	1840	2040	CJ6422
	3	1950	2140	CJ6422
	4	2040	2230	CJ6434
Fuzhou — Xi'an	2 5 7	0815	1120	MF8203
	4	0845	1055	MF8205
	1 2 4 6	1215	1505	2Z 562
	1	1355	1735	WH2508
	1 3 6	1435	1750	MF8203
Xi'an — Fuzhou	1	0905	1315	WH2507
	1 2 4 6	0940	1135	2Z 561
	4	1140	1345	MF8206
	2 5 7	1205	1455	MF8204
	1 3 6	1830	2130	MF8204
Guangzhou — Xi'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0940	1145	CZ3203
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1355	1610	WH2306
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1530	1745	CZ3201
	1 3 5 7	1720	1935	WH2370
Xi'an — Guangzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1045	1255	WH2305
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1240	1450	CZ3204
	1 3 5 7	1425	1640	WH2369
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1825	2045	CZ3202
Guiyang — Xi'an	2 4 7	1550	1715	CZ8627
	4 7	1800	1930	SZ4261
	1 2 3 5 6	1830	2000	SZ4261
Xi'an — Guiyang	2 4 7	1755	1910	CZ8628
	4 7	2010	2135	SZ4262
	1 2 3 5 6	2040	2205	SZ4262

Flights to and from Yan'an

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Yan'an	1 3 5 7	1245	1410	2Z 186
Yan'an — Beijing	1 3 5 7	1020	1205	2Z 185
Xi'an — Yan'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0910	0950	2Z 225
Yan'an — Xi'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1440	1520	2Z 226

Flights to and from Yulin

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Yulin	6	2050	2210	2Z 178
	2 5	1210	1330	2Z 178
Yulin — Beijing	6	1840	2005	2Z 177
	2 5	1030	1150	2Z 177
Xi'an — Yulin	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0850	0945	2Z 202
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1410	1500	2Z 262
Yulin — Xi'an	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1015	1105	2Z 201
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1530	1630	2Z 261

** For reference only.*

Airline codes:

CA = Air China
CJ = China Northern Airlines
CZ = China Southern Airlines
MF = Xiamen Airlines Co Ltd
MU = China Eastern Airlines
SC = Shandong Airlines
SZ = China Southwest Airlines
WH = China Northwest Airlines
XO = Xinjiang Airlines
XW = China Xinhua Airlines
2Z = Chang'an Airlines
3U = Sichuan Airlines

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE NO. 273

Feature Story:

Towards China's Northern and Eastern Extremes— Following the Heilongjiang

Sandwiched between China and Russia, the Heilongjiang (Black Dragon River) flows from the west to the east, passing through China's northernmost and easternmost cities — Mohe and Fuyuan respectively. The river mirrors the history of the two giant countries. Setting off from North Pole Village, our writer visits the flood and fire-stricken Mohe County, the ancient city of Aihui, the ruins from the invasion of Japanese troops, and much more. Meanwhile, tourists should not miss exotic Russian cities such as Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk.

Profile: Lee Shun Yan

A celebrated columnist in the local mass media, Lee is also a travel buff who has published several travel books about Southeast Asian destinations, including Beijing, Shanghai, Thailand and Japan. He is a well-known figure and can always be relied upon to introduce fresh itineraries dedicated to deluxe dining and lodging tips for Hong Kong yuppies. He will share his love of travel and his experiences.

Discoveries: The Legend of the Verandah Bridge

The American movie "The Bridges of Madison County" impressed many people with its touching story and beautiful scenery. Deep in the mountains between East China's Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, the same kind of structure as those depicted in the movie can also be found. The verandah bridge shelters people from rain and wind and inspires a legend among the locals.

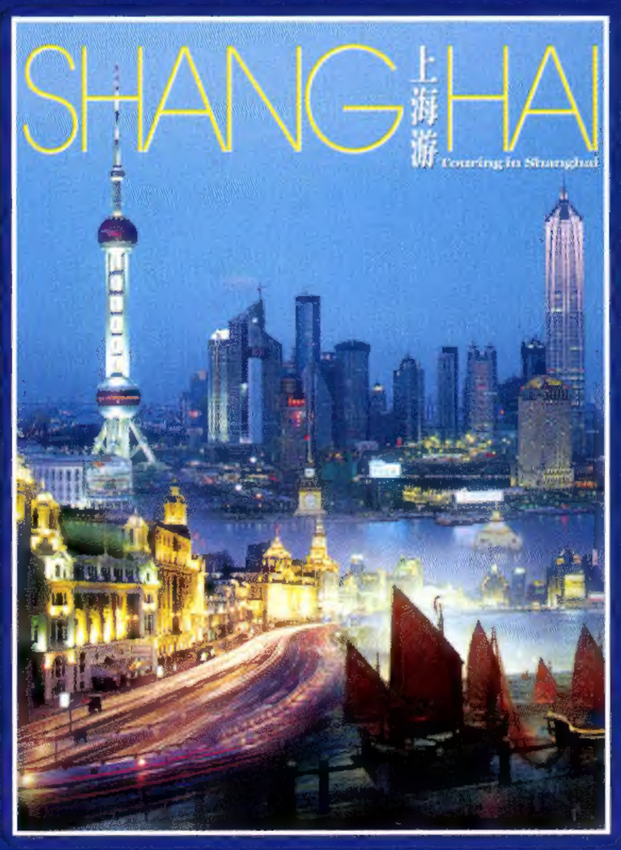
Bed & Board: Hostelling International — Stopovers for Wanderers

People stay at international hostels not only for economy and value for money, but also to enjoy the carefree ambiance within. Tourists meet with travellers from all around the world, exchanging the latest travel experiences. We introduce you to some stylish international hostels in China, including a Naxi-style hostel in Lijiang, study hall-style hostel in Xi'an, quadrangle hostel in Beijing and naval-hostel in Dalian.

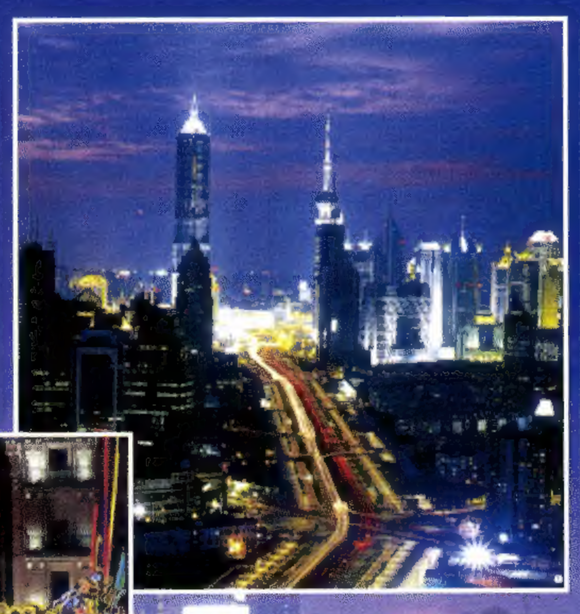
On the Way: Revisiting the Silk Road After Two Decades

A group of youngsters pledged to meet every 10 years after an unforgettable encounter on a trip to Northwest China 20 years ago. Time has gone by, leaving them not only beautiful pictures from their travels but also important milestones in life.

BEST SELLER



Shanghai has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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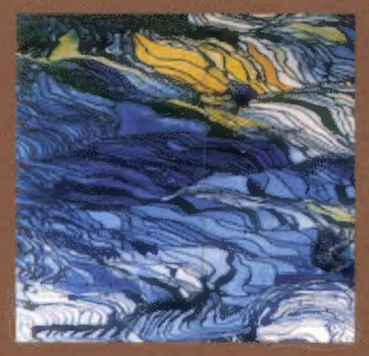

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